

Era of the Fusion Dragon and Lost Heroes

Story: Era of the Fusion Dragon and Lost Heroes

Storylink: <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/2405128/1/>

Category: Golden Sun

Genre: Adventure/Tragedy

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Authorlink: <https://www.fanfiction.net/u/787111/>

Last updated: 10/16/2005

Words: 31304

Rating: T

Status: In Progress

Content: Chapter 1 to 6 of 6 chapters

Source: FanFiction.net

Summary: [Formerly hanri quetton] Finally revised. I'd appreciate it if someone told me whether they wanted my next CH to be a long one, or split in 2 instead. As soon as I get even a few responses, I'll be sure to update sooner! Just tell me if u want long or short

***Chapter 1*: chapter 0: Forgetting Tears**

Disclaimer: Obviously, I do not own Golden Sun

Forgetting Tears

Post battle with the Fusion Dragon...

Post rift in time...

It was there Isaac laid, atop the ruined Venus aerie. He hadn't known how long he was there, sleeping deep upon un-rest, thoughts in worry and disarray. He was alone atop the tower and among the clouds; long forgotten by the world he so wished to save.

Isaac was lifeless in his own purgatory. His limp figure went unfeeling as the seconds went by—turning to hours and changing scenes, that spared nothing in its hast except for him alone. It was amusing how the flow of time, even only a day, mocked him with its inattentiveness.

Still the same, it didn't matter—Weyard could do nothing to return what had been taken from him. The earth adept was suspended in the inert standstill.

His slumbering features were unresponsive to the malevolence of fate, as never once were they roused. He almost seemed peaceful, *even*.

The sun was strong, suffocating him in its beaming embrace. The sunlight nibbled his cheeks with a tingle; its warm sensation danced upon his face and blended with the

coolness of his tear soaked cheeks, giving feeling from damp numbness.

Chapped lips were throbbing like blood, more so than the vibrance of his throat, or the veins on his wrists. Isaac's lower lip was rusted with broken skin, swollen with so many dark patches—yet still showed signs of life continuing once again, as his mouth moved in slow rises. It was as if they were whispering silence as he exhaled, warm air escaping through the gap.

The back of his ears were feverishly blushing in the day, as if *someone* in the world still spoke of him, behind his back, without him knowing, and even now...

He twitched his nose, early signs that his awaking mind was stirring his exhausted body up from sleep. He twitched his nose again, wrinkling it for a second. It was all to no avail.

Thoughts in the back of Isaac's mind washed out as they went unheard, whether they spoke insults or reason. It was a women's voice that did what his conscience could not. The voice spoke tenderly in his own remembrance, yet now seemed almost unrecognizable with its depressed, melancholic tone. Regardless, Isaac knew that it was her in this dinged, dreamy state of mind.

The thought of her was enough to keep him from withering into an early death, alone atop the lighthouse.

Isaac abruptly jerked into a sharp gasp for air, and then another, all the while thinking of her. His breath caught in his throat, unfortunately, as his constricted inhalations began to choke. He was breathless as he remained still on his back, almost trapped between his dream world and the lighthouse, even trapped between breaths. His eyes were

shut even tighter now as it became harder and harder for him to take in air.

It was as if he had surfaced from the ocean, having nearly drowned in its waters. He began to pant, the intervals of his breathing straining incredibly. He was drowning. Isaac, atop the Venus lighthouse, was drowning.

He was drowning in his own desperate and resentful tears. The feeling of loss: a tragedy in which he couldn't understand why he felt the way he did. Isaac couldn't grasp the puzzling emptiness, and couldn't help but wonder... how could he be so depressed over something he couldn't remember?

Memories flushed in like the sea, wave upon wave. His mind began to race frantically, leaving him unaware of the here and now, teasing him with insignificant thoughts of the past; thoughts leading to the last thing he remembered.

His panting stopped, like the calm before a storm. Did this scare him? Just as soon as he was ready to surrender to this plague of the mind, the tide of memories dimmed down to a steady mentality. Isaac remembered why his cheeks were stained with crystal tears.

His eyes snapped open, becoming blinded by the overhead sun. A streak of invisible white glimmered for a second in the sun's glare, as if looking through glass—a fine divider between him and the world around him. Of course, there was nothing there to separate him from the ruins of the broken tower.

His hand, which once lay motionless at his side, now gripped to its centre. His fingertips were bare, and caught up ash as it formed into a fist. The floor beneath him was lumpy and uneven for the entire aerie had caught in flames long before.

Now, he was lying on a mound of black sand, it's feel grittier rather than silky. The world around him soon became all too real with its present misery.

His eyes searched the once beautiful Venus aerie. He had realized then that he was on the level directly below it, and that the aerie itself laid in destruction, most of it torn, leaving the exposed sky above.

Isaac's eyes continued to explore; search the blackened walls that once were beautifully engraved with pictures, search the chipped ash covered floors, search the rubble all around... The aerie seemed dream-like, reflecting Isaac's own present state of mind, disbelieving and unreal.

His eyes finally settled on the beacon dish where the lighthouse light once seeded. Isaac could see what was left of it clearly from below, for the aerie once posed as a roof, and now was mostly gone. The dish was naked, a star no longer there producing light. As for the statues that adorned the aerie decoratively, all now had fallen, save one of which, was now painted a deep black. It was unrecognizable as a statue of Venus, the details upon its face now gone, a burned away beauty.

Isaac had risen to his feet, standing amidst a surrounding black. The impulse of Earth psynergy no longer surged through the now echoing halls and dull corridors.

He barely even noticed the Venus star motionless at his feet. His attention was elsewhere, to his own ash-covered hands. The burnt ash felt nothing like the warm earth he was so very familiar with. He was a Venus bound adept, and had grown to love his element the way others have their own. It was the nature of an adept, and he was no exception.

His mind trailed off with warm memories, unintentionally forgetting his own awareness. He accepted their invitation with open arms, willing with any excuse to get away from the here and now.

He thought back to Vale, to his younger days as a child. Isaac remembered when he first realized his own potential. Felix was the first to become acquainted with the basics of psynergy, and seeing how happy he was that day, golden light leaking through his hands, a rose barely blooming between his fingertips, only showed Isaac his own possibilities for the future. The rose itself was beautiful, a cottony feel with an empty scent; a thing that only Felix appreciated, for Garet and Isaac did nothing but criticize him for having made something somewhat feminine.

He thought back to Vale yet again, to when it was him who harnessed psynergy for the first time. He had summoned a minor quake, trying to impress a young, hot tempered, red haired little girl. They were playing at the riverside, and it was his way of ending a one-way argument between them both. The banks of the river felt comforting between his toes, and the quake had left her dumbstruck. She had giggled further, amused with his talent, though it was his first time. Isaac remembered how she hopped back and forth, playing while trying to maintain balance, until she inevitably lost it and stumbled forward. Jenna had recovered herself at the last moment, clinging to his bare back and laughing it off with a blush.

Isaac thought back to Imil, and how cold it was. He had remembered the first week he was there, and how the land was a pale white with hardened snow. Even then, when he'd have to dig through to reach the hidden earth, he would always find warmth and familiarity. If he held the soil long enough in his hands, and concentrated just as hard, he

would always feel homely. He remembered how he had gotten a cold that way, 'digging like a dog through the snow' as Gareth had put it. He could never forget how embarrassed he was by that remark, especially when the quiet blue-eyed newcomer had given him a consoling smile—raising one eyebrow in curiosity at his oddness. Isaac had found it awkward on his part with a woman like her in their party.

Finally his mind returned to his present dilemma, and how queer the black grains felt on his hands. They had imbedded themselves deep into the wrinkles of his palm and into his nails. He could feel each grain, and how empty it all left him, no warmth or relief. It left a bad taste in his mouth, and a growing resentment in his heart. It reminded him of why he was sad now.

He ran to a wall, furiously wiping his palms against it, despairingly trying to brush away all the black ash. Fury defined his cobalt blue eyes, piercing through his once forlorn surrender.

The wall itself was black though, and the more he rubbed at it, the more it began to chip and erode into more ash, staining his hands deeper and deeper. His cheeks could feel warm tears again.

He begged for it all to go away. Begging to himself, to anyone, to the thin air that surrounded him. Nothing. His tears were still silent, growing constant as a few quite sobs escaped his restraint.

As all hope was dismissed and Isaac finally ready to breakdown, things took a turn; the sky had taken pity on him with rain. It started as a few drops, then grew. It wasn't a

downpour, but if he stood still long enough the rain would clean the ash away.

And so, Isaac waited patiently, staring intently at his open palms and cringed fingers. Slowly, he watched the water fall down, and the traces of skin grew larger. The last of his tears were gone, along with all the ash.

He had remembered the reason he was crying... For a moment he had nearly forgotten, but then remembered again as time passed by, standing in the rain. He was alone now, with only himself to count on. He had to continue on alone, try his best for his party, for himself, for her...

He had remembered the reason he was crying, as he scooped up the star into his empty mythril bag, and headed for the exit. What he had to do now was forget it all, for a moment, the way he had done before the rain. Just for a moment, so that he could avenge death and finish his mission. Too much depended on him, and he would only need to push his memories aside until it was all finished. Isaac needed to blind himself from the past, just for a bit, yet never allow himself to truly forget, ever.

The dragon was still out there, it was something he could feel in the air... Felix was still out there, it was something he could feel in his heart... The shadows were growing, and soon Weyard would fall if he stopped in his quest now.

***Chapter 2*: chapter 1: mere moments in time**

Please R&R!

A/N: Out of courtesy to my long-time readers, I posted a more in-depth summary. Feel free to skip it, if you wish.

The science of alchemy manipulates reality. Reality is not only space, but time as well... What if the heroes of GS lost that fight with the Fusion Dragon? What if Sheba fell too far for Felix to catch her—what if Isaac lost everything dear to him? What if the *last testament* of Saturos and Menardi flew free and unopposed, while the heroes that would of stood ground before it, have been lost to the four corners of Weyard? A pirate... a prisoner... a soldier...an alchemist, slayers, howlers... ghosts; a lone girl, a lone boy... a memory.

...I think of you still...

Alex altered the past upon memories, resulting in an alternate timeline. The fates we knew are no longer sealed, and destiny will soon be re-written.

The people we were meant to be—will not be the ones we turn out to be. For how could we... if the world becomes what its not suppose to be?

Can the remaining lighthouses still be lit? And what *will* happen when the Golden Sun rises, if it even does at all?

(Alternate re-write of GS2, TLA. Action, adventure, suspense, romance, tragedy. OC's, character changes and event altering.)

Chapter 1: Mere moments in time

Post battle with the Doom Dragon, Post rise of the Golden Sun...

Pre rift in time...

And there Alex laid, deep within the hollows of Sol Sanctum—or at least what remained of it. Sol Sanctum, heart of the now collapsed Mt. Aleph, had all but vanished in a blinding white, a vast emptiness. It had been Alex's prison for the past month, a fate worse than death. There was nothing for him here, which would have driven any man to his own breaking points, insanity. Not Alex however.

There was a sound of silence, its pierce as thin as a needle, stinging him with nothingness. Alex was nothing anymore, and felt nothing, yet everything all at once, ironically. Subsequently, 'everything' to Alex, was in actual fact nothing now—nothing but the blank whiteness. Could this all be a dream?

The four lighthouses had been lit, Alchemy restored, and the Golden Sun was now clearly overhead the land of Weyard. Alex had been there for its dawn, the beginning of an Age of Alchemy, yet he himself did not have his desires quenched. With the blasphemous interventions of the Wise One, it was Isaac who had what Alex wanted. It was Isaac who had the Golden Sun, though not in its entirety... after all, Alex had been there for its daybreak. However a fragment of the Golden Sun was nothing to be proud of in his eyes.

Alex was inanimate in this self-appointed purgatory. He had not moved since the Wise One struck him down that fateful day. Eventually, this cold prison of his would take its toll, and swallow him in its silence. Weyard could do nothing to relieve him of this life-sentence.

Time had rushed in its flow, turning to a crawl in the adept's observant mind. The hours had gone, remembered only as an antagonizing blankness. The pass of eternity clinged to each second, sparing none in its torture.

Distraction had become commonplace, as his mind had a new tendency to wander. His will, whether it spoke criticizing insults or petty reasoning, lost focus in its entirety. It went from one daydream to another, an endless waltzed reverie. Thoughts danced gracefully through Alex's mind, thoughts of the past and of disappointments.

A bird with no song...no other words can describe me as well as such...

Alchemy—those with power...have no idea as to how to use it. They are oblivious to ambition, to possibilities and progression. And for myself, of whom has the potential to change the world... find myself without power, without Alchemy's science.

This world of ours... it is not what it's suppose to be... Even now I wish to go to you Mia...

Wait, science...

By Alex's will alone, he was able to summon the Stone of Sages in his company. The tablet lifted out of the emptiness, flat on its back beneath the adept.

"Science. I had nearly forgotten that fact," he spoke sadly to himself, disappointed that he had nearly dismissed the Stone of Sages. "All hope is not lost... at least not to those with will."

Alex felt the bruised surface of the stone press against his back. He struggled to concentrate, focus his psynergy. His

fingers were nimble as he traced the grooves of the stone's face below him. He concentrated further, swearing that he would not die without purpose. No, this was not his fate.

The stone began to vibrate, matching the incessant ringing in his ears. The engraved characters turned to light, and lifted from where they were on the tablet. All the letters were foreign to him, and flew like a twister, taking position in the space above him, line by line.

As quickly as they had risen, they fell, like rain upon his face. The characters fell through his eyes, and deep into his mind. (**A/N**: this is similar to finding a summon tablet in the game, but its not the same)

It was then that he understood it all. In an instant he was the master of this science, and knew all the secrets of Alchemy. He bore knowledge of all the elements and knew all of Weyard's history and secrecy.

However a bitter taste grew in Alex's mouth, for he quickly realized that his task was still unfinished.

This was not the power that I intended on having. What good is this knowledge without the capabilities to make my dreams real?

All the knowledge he knew, all the things he learned, needed god-like psynergy to perform, of which he had not.

His last hope was to manipulate reality.

Reality was not only space, but time as well. According to the Sages Stone, time was measured best through the memories of Weyard, Sol and Luna. It would be through his own memories that he would alter time, search through the

past for a new 'path to walk', and redo the choices he had made so that he could attain the Golden Sun.

His mind flashed quickly, for he did not have long. He could already feel his thoughts and psynergy strain, his body withering. If only he had the power of the Golden Sun entirely...

Quick realization came upon Alex, as he knew he could push no further, forcing a compromise. He hadn't enough power to travel back in time to the *Lost Age of Man*, as he was cut-short prematurely, upon Venus lighthouse, shortly before it's igniting.

Alex's ghostly figure floated over Felix, studying him as he turned from his sister and pace towards the stairs. The water adept hovered there in disbelief with his own disembodied state, until realizing that opportunity had finally been founded. Alex followed him into the dark stairwell desperately, and reached out to Felix as he ran down.

His arm ran straight through the Earth adept's back, and out his chest, freezing both their heartbeats at the same instant. Felix fell to the steps before him, lifeless, as he did not make a sound.

Alex stared at his own hand with a puzzling curiosity. "...Did I kill him? No, he lives. I suppose that's fortunate at any rate, for if he were to die, that would not benefit my current dilemma I would think."

And then it happened, a feeling that couldn't be explained, yet known to be true. He could feel his old world begin to change, and his present-self begin to die, as time itself was being re-written.

It would seem that I've done more than enough here. The past has been altered, leaving my timeline no longer existent Hopefully, fate will be much more kinder to me this time around.

Indeed it was true; hope had been renewed. In his last moments, he formed his thoughts into a seed, no bigger than a grain of rice. He sent it to the other side of the wall, a token for the Alex of this timeline, who had just made his entrance before Jenna and Kraden.

"I'm sure that you will need my memories for your own future," Alex spoke, as he peered out of the stairwell from the dark. "Your future: whether master of the Golden Sun, or no different from my own. Either way, the knowledge of the Stone of Sages will benefit you greatly."

Those were his last words as he faded away.

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Pre battle with the Fusion Dragon

Post rift in time

"We've spoken long enough already. Let us continue this another time" Alex ended their discussion with haste, feeling uncomfortable with Jenna's persistence. "We should leave the lighthouse now, before the beacon is fired..." Alex spoke to Kraden, avoiding Jenna's blush coloured eyes. Her glare was still piercing, as if questioning his intentions further, looking through his facade.

"I concur... Let's meet at the location we agreed on and wait for Felix" Kraden answered.

Felix.

Alex's eyes became deluded as he began to feel dizzy. For some strange reason he felt guilty, as if he had done something wrong or forgetful.

"All right Kraden, let's go" Jenna responded, cooling her stare at Alex to nod at the old man. The two began to walk towards the exit, as Alex didn't budge. The water Adept looked down quickly at Jenna, as she nodded at him walking by.

She was such an innocent naive little girl, giving him a gentle poke with her index finger after she had passed him. The poke was her way of motioning him to follow; yet still he did not stir. For some strange reason, Alex had an uneasy feeling that Felix was still there, close by. It was odd, because he felt as if Felix was *just* on the other side of that wall.

He quickly dismissed the thought as he turned his back. He wasn't going to allow his imagination get carried away. There was no possible reason whatsoever for someone to just loiter in a staircase...

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Felix's eyes slowly lifted to greet the darkness of the stairwell. For a second he had forgotten where he was, thoughts still forgotten in sleep. It felt like night to him, his crippled awareness told him to go back to sleep and wait for daybreak. However a thought came to realization, as his dreary eyes had continued their slumber. He had already seen the sunrise that day...

The earth adept quickly lifted his face, studying the odd curves and grooves that defined the darkness. They were traced outlines of the stairwell, sketched by the light coming from the empty hall below.

"What am I doing here?" Felix scoffed under his breath. He could barely remember where he was, till concern for Sheba came racing back.

His face felt numb, as if his shoulder had been cradling his cheek for hours on end, uncomfortably. He could feel the numbing imprints on the side of his face, made by the embroidery of his traveling vest.

Felix flew to his feet, effortlessly brushing away his cape. The earthly emerald ruffled as it swung, draping his collapsing knees. It all seemed mesmerizing, as he stood for a second, then toppled forward in vertigo. He regained his balance in an instant, stretching and weaving every tendon in his leading leg. Felix tipped to the side, depending on the darkened wall to support his weight.

He was in disbelief at the thought of having fainted, something that would have been new to him. He hadn't known how long he was there, though a guilty wrenching in his side told him otherwise. It told him that much time had passed, and Felix was always one to trust his instincts.

Saturos...

Saturos had expected him to return to the aerie and help fight off any threats. He needed Felix's Venus power in case Isaac had caught up.

That was in actual fact one of the ulterior motives he had for taking young Sheba with them to the beacon. Menardi had deducted that Felix would fight against Isaac, as long as he had incentive to. Sheba's safety was incentive enough for Felix to fight, as she simply became blackmail fodder.

However Felix had other plans. His initial idea was to take Sheba and the Jupiter star from them, before Isaac would

show up. Felix despised the idea of following Saturos any further in this crusade.

Now Felix wasn't as confident in his plan anymore, thinking that an opportune moment may have passed already, as he had fainted in the night-like darkness.

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Felix reached the aerie, dumbstruck to be greeted with a golden light; the Venus beacon had already been lit!

Saturos had thrown in the star earlier, meaning Felix had probably slept through the igniting. He had probably slept through an 'opportune moment' as well, as Felix knew it was just too late to confront his Proxian companion. He could already hear the screams of Isaac.

"Saturos don't do it! Please!"

"He can't, you monster!"

"Please! Don't drop me! Help!"

"Damn that fool!" Garet fell to his knees, fists clenched. His shoulder dripped a dewy red, but he couldn't allow his bleeding to bother him. His temper was distraction enough.

"Alright alright, I'm dropping my sword, you don't need to do this," Isaac pleaded yet again, out stretching both hands in front of him in negotiations. He could not allow the Laliverian girl to be thrown off the lighthouse

Saturos stood there at the edge, his left arm extended outwards to his side—into an empty sky as he clutched the tiny wrist of Sheba, dangling her over the ledge. His complexion was cut and bruised, gashes all along his armor.

Sheba meanwhile stifled back her tears, glazing her eyes. She was fighting back as best she could, kicking and squirming in mid-air, while clutching onto Saturos' elbow with her free arm. She was afraid of falling, but at the same time would not just hang there helplessly. No, she was a fighter.

"Nothing can be gained by this." Isaac spoke, determination in his expression, as he looked the Proxian up and down and then gave a consoling look to Sheba. "Please just give her to us."

Saturos' brow began to twitch, as he tasted blood. His blood. Droplets trickled down his cheeks, almost melting into the corners of his lips. As self-proclaimed as he was, he was proud enough to enjoy its taste, almost rich with power, his power—conceded pride, all of which became lost in vanity. What was he to do now?

Menardi had fallen in battle, he himself injured, and to make things worse, Felix had never showed up. Either the young man ran into Isaac on his way back, and was now left for dead somewhere in the lighthouse—or the worst had happened, meaning that Felix betrayed them in their time of need like a coward.

"Isaac," Ivan whispered under his breath, motioning with his chin towards the still, Gaia blade on the floor. His expression was reflected clearly on the flat of Isaac's sword, filling the Valean's eyes with swift decisiveness. The earth adept knew well enough to trust Ivan's judgement. He could tell that Ivan had sensed something was going to happen, courtesy of his mind-reading capabilities. Isaac slowly began to reach for his sword and Ivan's reflected complexion; this had to be done quickly.

The negotiating atmosphere left the aerie, as Saturos flinched at the gesture. It would seem that they would fight yet again. A slight grin crept onto the Proxian's face as he sensed that Menardi thought the same, and was secretly healing herself while they were all distracted. He choked back a smirk, statuesque with his stern poker-face still. If they were to fight again, initiative would have to be theirs this time around. To get this was obvious though, as Saturos quick-wittedly planned it all out in his head: throw Sheba off the tower, and then take advantage of Isaac's shock.

Sheba was useless at this moment, and she had to be compromised. The way Felix felt didn't matter anymore. After all, where was he right now? Certainly he wasn't there for Sheba.

Saturos raised his arm quickly, ready to drop the girl—yet it was an angry cry that stayed his grip. The adept had arrived...

A strong, bitter tempered war cry rose deep from within Felix's throat. It was brief for a moment, as he had broken into a gallop, fierce with an eerie silence

Isaac turned swiftly on one heel, staring in astonishment at his childhood friend, charging with sword in hand. A member of Saturos' team had flanked him from behind...

Isaac knew he was caught off guard, and that if Felix wished to, he could kill him in seconds, as it had appeared so. Felix ran straight for the surprised Isaac, as if staring right through him. The younger Valean watched his eyes desperately, the lump in his throat soon swallowing with a familiar relief.

Not once had the two made eye contact. The threat was not for him, and apart of Isaac had always known that.

It will end now Saturos: your reckless leadership, you false solutions of this campagne, your growing insanity, and my diminishing respect for you... you are no longer the Saturos I knew, and it will be that much easier to see you die...

"No! You can't take him from me!" Mia threw herself into Isaac's chest, in an effort to stand between the two Earth adepts. Her face buried deep, drowning in Isaac's blue vest. She clutched onto his arms coldly, shielding him from Felix.

Isaac was taken a back, as he instinctively held her closer to him. He was disbelieving by her sudden burst of affection towards him, by the selfless act of love that he never expected. All he wanted to do was hold onto her tightly, tell her that she had nothing to fear from Felix, that everything would be fine. But there was no time to do so, for at that moment Ivan jumped in front of Felix defensively.

"You're with them Felix! I won't let you kill Isaac!" Ivan yelled as he spun his sword above his head.

None of them had seen the hidden truth, none but Isaac. To them, the actions of Felix were always unreadable, and now the team was acting on the worst of presumptions. None of them had trust for the mysterious man, all except one Earth adept that had known him too well. Ivan on the other hand, was ready to take Felix's head clear off.

You stupid boy...

Those were the last words that ran through Felix's mind before reaching for his sword. Felix was a warrior, whether it was shown or not under his calm collective appearance. However, his reserved disposition couldn't change the fact that he was trained by Saturos, and had the instincts of a Proxian *elite*. That was the one thing Saturos had truly

passed on to him, the ability to let go, let his instincts take over in disregard—to lose control.

Felix drew his sword from his left, and threw it into a vertical spin as he swung his right arm. The handle of Felix's short sword countered Ivan's Kikuichimonji as the Wind adept brought it downward. Felix continued the spin of his own sword with fluency, landing its blade in the corner of Ivan's jaw. The blow resonated, dislocating his jaw as he hunched over.

Felix had the instincts of a cold-blooded warrior all right, but still had a pure and true heart. He didn't have time for reason, for Sheba was about to fall. He had no choice but to remove Ivan as a threat, yet at the same time knew he wasn't ready to kill. At least not Ivan.

Felix quickly threw his foreleg to the ground from mid-air, and leaped effortlessly over Ivan. He landed on the boy's right shoulder blade, and pushed upward hard, pivoting himself off the boy into a wide forward leap; he was bound in Saturos' direction, though the distance was still remarkably far.

The force from Felix's jump continued to push Ivan forward off balance, in the other direction. It was then that he heard a blood curdling scream and last warnings from Isaac. As he continued to fall, Ivan turned around enough to catch a glimpse of Menardi...

As soon as Felix had launched himself off of the young boy, Menardi had dashed from where she lay, taking advantage of the young man's surprise entry. She had shoved both Isaac and Mia to the floor, lunging beneath the sky-bound Felix, straight towards a crippling Ivan.

She was directly below Felix, yet he took no notice of her. His eyes stayed focused on Saturos. In return, the ruby eyes of the male Proxian stared back with malice. This moment was shared by the two, a moment for them alone. The world around them turned completely black as their death stare for one another intensified.

Saturos knew my responsibilities toward the girl...he knew how I felt...

Felix that fool, I see him for what he is now, a spoiled little boy... how could this girl weaken him so...

How could he...

How could he...

A chill ran down Isaac's spine as Menardi charged in with her scythe. Ivan tried to lift his sword as he continued to stumble, but then felt a sharp pain, an excruciating strain that left him numb. Felix's sword had not run deep, yet it had imbedded a strong enough shock to his neck, disabling him from a fight. That had been Felix's intentions, except that no one had thought that Menardi would finish off what he had started...

The tip of the scythe caught the boy by his left shoulder, and kept him from falling. It had gone deep into his inner chest, and slowly began to kill him. Ivan's eyes grew empty as he rested his face to his left, against Menardi's blood stained blade.

"Nooooo!" Isaac screamed as he began to scramble to his feet once again, leaving Mia on the floor.

"Come and claim it, the one reason you have betrayed us now!" Saturos screamed, lifting the girl higher on his left.

"Felix!"

"Sheba!"

"Nooo!" Sheba screamed as Saturos let her drop. She would have fallen if not for Felix's quick instincts. Before she had slipped from his fingers, Felix summoned a minor quake, throwing Saturos off balance to the right. Sheba fell from his grip, barely grabbing onto the trembling ledge. She struggled to pull herself up but found it hard enough to cling on.

"I don't have time for you child!" the Proxian whispered as he gathered psynergy in his left fist, pointing it at her.

Felix ran towards the edge as well, throwing his sword down onto Saturos' blade. Felix locked swords with his former companion, then ducked low as Saturos shot fire at him instead. Now, gripping his sword with his left, he gave a right hook towards Saturos' side, planting his fist into a sword wound Isaac had previously made. He could feel smooth *mythril* in his fingertips and instinctively grabbed at it...

"Felix!" Sheba strained in a whisper, as one by one her fingers slipped, finally giving way entirely. Saturos screamed in agony at the cheap pain Felix had inflicted, and soon caught a glimpse of Menardi leaping to his aid.

With his back still turned to the rest of the aerie, Felix sensed an attack, instinctively lifting his sword up, still locked with that of Saturos. There was a loud clang as Menardi's scythe was defended, the knees of the two male adepts trembling from the blow. Now all three blades were locked together.

All three had trained hard together in the Northern badlands.

The two Proxians even grew to like Felix, and trust him as if he were one of their own. Saturos had always believed that Felix was more kind hearted, was a better person. He remembered how he was the most childlike between him and Agatio, a sort of little brother you could always tease. It always seemed like Felix was too compassionate, always sympathetic or distressed about the cold climate of Prox. It had always seemed like he needed Saturos and Agaito as older brothers. However in actual fact, it was more like Saturos needing him as a younger brother.

Menardi was different on the other hand. When Felix was young, he was quite taken with her. He was not as attracted to her as Saturos had been; he was just taken in awe by her beauty. However that was when they had first met, and were still getting to know each other. Now, three years later he had long lost that image of her, for she had grown older, her features maturing more into that of a warrior's rather than of a young women. But that childlike awe was remembered, which was why now as a young man he still felt like he could confine in her.

However all of these memories were long dismissed. So many people had entered the lives of these three... Isaac, Jenna, Alex, Sheba. What ties which once existed, were forgotten, as all three blades remained locked together in strife.

Felix faced both Proxians, back against the edge of the aerie. It had all happened in an instant. Mere seconds had past since Sheba's fall, and no one expected Felix to do the unthinkable. His body was still as he leapt *backwards* out of the fray. It *was* truly unthinkable.

Both Proxians ran to the ledge, looking down.

"Felix..." Saturos whispered under his breath, slightly noticing the guilt Menardi had in her eyes.

"Fine. It was his decision," Menardi spoke callously, brushing off the regret that had been shown so clearly in her face.

"We have our own problems," she continued, motioning to the group back on the aerie.

"How could Felix of..." words slipped off Isaac's tongue, as he continued to debate as to whether or not that had actually happened. "We'll take them together," he finally declared to Gareth at his side. "Starting with Saturos. He hasn't had a chance to heal himself from the previous battle." He glanced over his shoulder as he noticed Gareth leave Ivan's side.

"Who fights that way, striking down Ivan then running away?" Gareth himself had engaged Menardi after she struck Ivan, but she had been too evasive for him. Both Gareth and Isaac went forth, reluctantly glancing one more time at Mia, still on her knees holding the wind adept.

"Do not dare mock the strongest of the Mars clan," Saturos growled.

"Unlike you, the most powerful of our clan understand how strong a bond there is between yourself and the one that stands beside you in battle." Menardi hissed in Saturos' stead, confidence quenching her lips.

"Fire and Earth share a symbiotic relationship... the advantage you thought you had Isaac, no longer exists when you fight us at our strongest! The battle is far from over!"

XXXXX

The short sword slipped from Felix's hand as he shot both arms out in a dive. The wind watered his eyes, making his vision foggy. He soared downward through the sky, cold air suffocating his lungs. Felix screamed out to tell her that he was there, only to have his words muffled by the sharp whistling sound of his fall through the sky.

Sheba had not heard him, but had clearly seen his body get larger and larger as it chased her fall. She screamed to him, not knowing what else to do.

Gust after gust struggled to keep her from falling further, yet could not deny gravity's hold. She couldn't understand how much faster Felix flew off the lighthouse, quickly catching up to her.

Slight relief came over Felix's face, as he was only a few arm lengths away from her. The world behind her as she fell moved faster and faster as they drew closer to their own inevitable impact.

XXXXX

The Venus aerie was swept into a blinding light, and shook terribly, as both Proxians were the epicenters. Both Saturos and Menardi became seduced with the one drive to win, thus sacrificing their bodies for the sake of victory—becoming consumed by the dragon they fused into.

The lighthouse shook violently, the beacons power reaching ecstasy. As the fusion grew, the beacon began to bend and wane, the perfect sphere becoming rippled by their growth. They had been far too close to the beacon when they began the fusion, earth and fire colliding unnaturally.

It was blinding to the adepts that stopped short in their charge. Though they had not seen the results of Saturos'

threats, they had clearly heard its echoing cry, as well as feel its warm haze upon their faces and through the many layers they wore upon their chests.

"What is that?" Gareth cried as the light vanished leaving the dragon before them.

"I don't know," Isaac replied.

It was overwhelming to look at, its enormous stature towering over both Isaac and Gareth. The coat of white throughout its body was dull, with darker patches near its limbs, resembling the white of a young newborn horse. It had a brilliant violet mane upon both of its heads, as well as many rows of teeth. Its wingspan swooped over the two, embracing them as it advanced toward their reach.

Isaac's back was against Gareth's as they watched the towering wings carefully.

"What now?" Gareth asked in curiosity.

"Get out of there!" Mia screamed as her companions disappeared from sight.

XXXXX

I'm almost there...

Sheba's hand reached out to Felix, fingers trembling from the stretch. She was doing all she could. The rest was left up to him.

Both arms were forward as he ducked his head even lower, increasing the speed of his fall. It was too much for his sight to bear, cold drops of water leaking from the wind in his

eyes. They traced the top of his cheek, before leaping off into his long earth brown bangs.

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There was an eerie pause atop the lighthouse, which felt like an eternity in Mia's heart. It was heart wrenching for her.

The beacon grew larger, as the lighthouse began to tremble and crack. The fusion had affected the Venus light in undeniable ways. The sphere resonated with golden light, singing like a living heart, growing and expanding with every beat. The earth around the lighthouse began to vibrate; the cry of the sea echoing while the howl of the wind gave signal to darker skies.

The moment soon took a turn for the worse; as the dragon's wings flung back to the dragon's side, fire emptying from its throat.

XXXXX

Her eyes widened to see that she was within Felix's fingertips, warmth beginning to rush over her cheeks. However shock and terror filled her heart, as suddenly an ominous figure appeared behind the Earth adept. It teleported from the empty sky, faster than anything she had ever seen before. It was quick upon him, and as it drew near to the both of them, it became aware, as if it had been dormant for a time. Its presence became spine tingling to the girl, as its psynergy levels rose, eyelid widening, blue rings enveloping its body, enveloping her body.

In an instant Sheba was gone, slipping away before Felix could grab her. She was snatched away, leaving Felix to fall alone, with the cold touch of harsh waves upon his face.

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Isaac threw his palm to the floor, summoning a large quake sphere. The surface of the aerie changed its flat composer, forming a wave swaying towards both him and Gareth. The psynergy quake brought his friend to his knees, then threw the both of them to the sky, escaping the reaches of the blanketing fire.

They soared to eye level with the dragon, mere flies before a rabid dog.

Gold and ruby flashed brilliantly, as their attacks struck their own respective head targets—Isaac striking to the left, Gareth to the right. The dragon cringed from the shock, damage only being cosmetic to the face.

The two Valeans landed on either side before the Fusion Dragon, amazed by its resistance. "This is gonna be a lot harder than before," Gareth stated.

Mia took one last look at Ivan, who still lay motionless in her arms. She had wasted most of her psynergy trying to heal him, but it was to no avail. His blood was all over her lightly coloured sleeves, yet her eyes were again locked on the final battle. She released the boy, drawing her mace to her side and charging to join the others. She could do no more for Ivan.

The beast swung its heads to the side, exhaling toxins at Isaac. A thick cloud flew low towards the adept, ready to consume him. He summoned yet another quake, launching his body further to the left, flanking the creature. The Fusion Dragon continued to move its two heads, all eyes following Isaac to his fixed landing position.

Isaac was dumbfounded as he saw himself land into the deadly gas. His attempt in leaping away had failed, as the cloud then died down to waist level. He brought his arms up to cover his face, already choking. His eyes became bloodshot, images blurry.

"Isaac!" Gareth charged at the beast, only to be swiped at by its tail. He was thrown ten feet from where he was, as his previous shoulder wound ripped even further. He lifted to his knees, clutching at his pain, in the middle of the aerie

Mia had caught up to Gareth, only to see the floor begin to crack beneath him.

"Watch out!" She grabbed at his shoulders with both hands, warning him that the floor was going to give way. The crack grew incredibly, parting the aerie into two.

The Water adept swung her weight into pulling Gareth to the right, not being strong enough to pull him away. She tumbled to the safety of hard marble, while Gareth tipped over as well. He had not cleared the tear in the floor, and had fallen in half way, struggling to hold on with his good arm.

The Venus lighthouse had finally given into the pressure of the beacon. With the sound of thunder, the lighthouse cracked in two. From top to bottom, it split in half.

Gareth was caught in the middle, Mia trying her best to pull him up. Isaac was trapped on the other side alone with the dragon. She watched in horror, as the Fusion Dragon began to take quick swipes at the blinded young man. He swung his sword wildly in defense, only to miss and get struck down.

His sight began to clear, as he realized that his eyes had strayed, locking now on Mia, worry strong in hers. The dragon was too much for him alone. Ivan was dead, and Gareth was struggling to hold onto the edge. He found himself whispering quiet words for her to leave. Isaac had lost. He reached into his vest, emptying the mars star from the mythrill bag. He rose to his feet, winding his arm back as if to throw. He didn't want to do this to her, but she alone had to continue on. It would break his heart to see her die here.

He shot his arm forward, the grip on the star beginning to loosen with the throw.

Good-bye. I'm sorry my fair princess. I wanted to give you so much more...

Isaac depressingly smiled at this thought, readying himself for death, as he let the star slip from his fingers.

"I never wanted you to see me die like...Ugh!" Isaac's faint whispers were drowned out as the dragon roared, swooping in from behind. Its bite embraced his right arm, as well as the thrown star. A cold chill ran down his back before painful stabs seeped in.

The dragon's right head lifted up, pulling Isaac up in its jaw. He swallowed back a scream, as his body hung there, his limb beginning to rip at the shoulder. Mia screamed out to him, summoning shards of ice that flew at the dragon. They struck with a misty shatter, attracting it to her alone.

Its second head turned to her, shooting toxic gases through the air.

"No!" Gareth screamed, half of his body laying on the edge while his lower half still dangled. Red psynergy hit the

flammable gas, and a grand explosion threw Mia backwards, consuming Gareth in its burn.

Garet had always been a good friend to Isaac. He was the only Valean to follow him in his quest after Jenna, and he was the first to discover Isaac's true feelings toward Mia. Since then he had always tried to look out for her in their journey, a sort of bodyguard, out of loyalty to his friend.

Now, he had surrendered his life to protect a girl Isaac loved. He was a true friend.

The Fusion Dragon flipped its head back, tossing Isaac's body over its shoulder. His limp frame tumbled from the throw, before he finally slammed into one of the aerie statues. The dragon then took flight, skipping to the right side of the lighthouse. It stood before Mia, who stood alone and scared. Steam leaked from its mouth, its cold eyes staring down on her.

Isaac laid there in immense pain. His arm was still there, yet he couldn't feel it. If it hadn't been for his eyes, he would have never realized that his hand was naked, the star no longer in his grip.

A light grew within the dragon, its white collar growing to become a rose red. It had consumed the star, and the heat began to burn at the violet mane. Light shot from both mouths, an echoing shrill accompanying it. Its body turned to light, both heads flailing in chaos.

Mia took advantage of its predicament, and sprang to her feet running towards Isaac. The crack still separated them, so she screamed out to him in desperation. He tried to answer, but his voice was drained.

It was then that the dragon's body became faint, the light turning humid and red. Its outline began to transform into the ever-moving shape of a blaze. It was from this blaze that a new silhouette emitted, its image anew.

The dragon became a cruel black, deeper than that of a midnight's contrast. Its full spine and body was shelled with template scales, each intricately grooved to a ridge. Its under belly was crimson, while its wings were bat-like and black; all parts of which were painted with faint washes of purple.

Its limbs were lizard-like, while all its talons were chipped in a decaying yellow; the hind leg claws existing bigger in comparison. Along the sides of the beast were reptilian fins, most of which were folded, parallel to its horizontal middle. It had a long black, naked, tail; a tail pointed at the end with a bony sickle.

The dragon had two heads, each one locked at the end of their own individual serpent-like necks. The necks had bold crocodile-shaped hides, all smothered in black and crimson. As for the actual heads, they were magnificently identical, each one rigidly sculpted, while their cheekbones poked and stretched at the fleshless skin, producing an ivory fade. More silvery-white fins shot downwards behind each head, rooting from the joint in which the neck bone met the skull. They formed an upside-down, fan-like shape, concealing the under part of each throat

It was truly sinister.

Isaac's name was sung, so gently amidst the roaring winds. It was Mia who called for him, straining the beautiful notes of her voice, as if plucking a harp violently. Not once did she

show fear though, as she looked to Isaac, watching him watch her, as the fires took her away from him...

Not once had she screamed in death.

He too awaited death, yet it never found him. The beacon reached out to Isaac, in a ribbon of light that twisted and turned. It took Isaac by the waist, and whipped him back into the golden core of the faint Venus sphere.

Isaac could hear the dragon's roar, as if lulling him to sleep—as if claiming all of Weyard as its own. However the explosion ruled the aerie, and the golden Venus light, along with Isaac himself, vanished...

A/N: I hope you enjoyed the ch. Inspiration for the Fusion Dragon's upgrade came from: Tiamat and Eclipse (both summons from the game), the dragon's from "Escaflowne" (you'll see why in the future), and finally the vampires from "Blade 2"(again, you'll know why in the future). The dragon had to have an upgrade, or this fic would have seemed cheap. Please write me a review!

Peace and good love

***Chapter 3*: chapter 2: She was nameless I**

A/N: Here's a recap

Alex was trapped on Mount Aleph when it collapsed. There, he discovered the science behind the Stone of Sages.

He manipulated time, and exhausted Felix's body at Venus lighthouse. Thus, Felix never made it to the aerie before Isaac.

He never had the argument with Saturos, meaning that time wasn't wasted. Because time wasn't wasted, Saturos was able to cast the star in before Isaac showed up. They fought, and naturally as a team, Isaac won.

Before he could accept defeat, Saturos used Sheba as a bargaining chip, threatening to throw her off. Felix lost his temper, and there was another fight.

Thus, in all the chaos, Saturos and Menardi resorted to a fusion, though accidentally, they were too close to the beacon, causing a natural disaster as fire and earth collided. Afterwards, when Isaac was losing, things took another turn for the worse, involving a freak accident with the Mars Star...

Chapter 2 Act 1: She was Nameless

Post Fusion Dragon...

The young girl stroked Isaac's hair from his forehead, and rested her dainty fingers upon his still arm. A concerned look was on her pouted, cute face, for Isaac had been unconscious for a time.

"Um... Is he staying here with us?"

There was a long pause, silence sharply piercing Isaac's ears. His eyes were shut, yet light seeped through the lids. ".... No, the boy Isaac must return... This is not his place, nor will it ever be."

The girl's brow lowered, as her gaze reached up from Isaac. "So he is to return!" she answered in approval. She continued, looking down at the boy that lay motionless in front of her. "Is he to return, and find Felix?"

He took notice of her question and averted his gaze. He had picked up on her feelings toward the situation, and had known that she wanted him to answer yes.

"Isaac will proceed upon his own discretion, ... and upon the day break following the moon's old face, ...he will awaken."

Disappointed, she concluded that it was his way of saying no. Her hands left Isaac, as she laid them to rest on her lap. She continued to kneel, but her eyes began to search the empty light all around.

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Pre Twilight Quake...

The sound of calm waves as well as the smell of the fresh sea air filled the admiral's senses. A stream of sunlight fell through the soft, cotton-churned clouds, and lit the ship's deck.

Piers shielded his eyes from the rays of the sun, as he spotted the golden beacon through the mist and upon the horizon. He had left the confines of the Lemurian mainland,

and was bestowed with a task entitled to him alone, a world's burden upon his shoulders.

"Could that be a lighthouse beacon?" he announced, still staring at the golden flash of light. His ship rocked up and down with each shove of the water, bobbing the head of the vessel in drifting bumps.

The boat began to rock, as the crash of waves far off grew louder. The peacefulness of the Eastern Sea soon became eerie and dark, as clouds became flat, sunlight still leaking. However the sounds of the current grew louder, as well as the squalls of flocking seagulls becoming worrisome.

The Lemurian scrambled up the ladder to the ship's nest, and looked beyond the deck, to the far reaches of the east. He had clearly seen it through the mist, a grand wave that swept the entire sea...

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"Kraden, you must hurry!" Jenna yelled to the old man as they ran to Idejima. The elder of the two had stopped, his hands falling to standing knees.

"I am sorry my child," Kraden responded, reaching for his chest, "that last man scared me out of my wits end" Jenna bit her lip as she rested both wrists on her hips.

They were soon interrupted as the golden beacon became lit. "Well, better early than late I suppose. I see my brother had no problems in lighting the beacon." Jenna continued to smile, fingers clasping the collar of her dress.

She had come to the conclusions that Isaac hadn't caught up with the others...

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"Ma? What is that?" The little boy tugged frantically on his mother's apron, both of them standing in their doorway, looking southeasterly toward the distant beacon.

"Get inside sweetheart," the woman patted the boy's bottom with the back of her hand, barely giving a glance at the golden light. The distant, southeastern light distracted many of the Suhallan townspeople, though she was more pre-occupied with the image of a traveller.

The foreigner looked odd, even if she were a warrior or merchant. Short-cut, maroon coloured hair slipped out from under her hood, as she walked with grace; crimson cape flowing out from under her brownish robe, swooping at her footsteps.

She had barely any belongings with her, carrying only a small purse slung over her waist, too small to hold any real supplies or necessities.

Her voice was raspy, yet carried a civil tone, as the words she whispered were spoken to the thin air—it was obvious that she had been thinking aloud. So many thoughts plagued this lone traveller. Thoughts of the family she left behind, her family yet to find... Questioning thoughts of self worth, pride, and determination was all she knew in her travels alone.

As she gazed further at the golden beacon so far away, she swore that regardless of what all others thought now, she had to find them...

Her oath was interrupted, as the distant beacon blinked twice, then faded into the red flame. She presumed that there was an explosion atop the lighthouse, for the fire was

grand, so sudden that even the sound of cracking stone did not follow, until seconds later in an ominous delay. The blaze formed into the image of a captured sunrise above the lighthouse peak.

"Get inside! Women and children first, quickly!" Everyone took heed of the unseen alarm, running to the confines of any nearby house. Only the traveller remained, silent as ever, as if a ghost among the chaos.

A gust of wind flew down on her, loosening the knot she had on her robe. Her hood was thrown back, the brown drapery sliding off her slender physique. The robe was carried with the wind, yet she stood her ground with ease.

The ruby-maroon of her hair matched her eyes, slightly concealing the peach colour. Two side bangs framed her face on either cheek, while the complexion of her face turned apprehensive, the corners of her ears slightly lifting.

"I pray that the Proxians I search for were not there..."

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Alex stood there staring at the red light, the soldier's collar still in his grip. The Tolbian had already fallen, yet hung there at Alex's knee, waiting for his beating to continue. Alex relaxed his hand from the fist it was and let the man fall back to the ground.

All the other soldiers surrounding him backed off, some even dropping their weapons as they witnessed the Venus lighthouse ablaze. The wind picked up, throwing the sand into the air and onto the clothes of all the men. Tolbi soldiers littered the alluvial boundaries of the desert, most of them soaked from head to toe, though there hadn't been any body

of water around. Nearly half of all the men had been struck down, most of them dead.

Yet all of it was forgotten, as each and every eye was fixed on the red light. Alex grew worried, forgetting all the soldiers.

"I must take my leave gentlemen; consider yourselves lucky..." he spoke, as he dusted some sand off his shoulders. He began to walk off in the direction of the lighthouse, towards the dark skies. None of the soldiers stopped him, or in fact noticed the young Imilian leave the battle unfinished and unharmed.

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Post Twilight Quake...

Post Chapter 0...

Night had fallen.

The forest was endless, the treetops swooping in haunting lows, reaching down to Isaac. He was covered in blotches of his own red blood.

Isaac fell in fatigue, collapsing to his knees, and then to all fours. Tiny blades of grass tickled the softness between his fingers, so thick and plentiful under his weight. There was another flash, as the silence of the wind became roaring.

A dragon roared in the night, swooping over the trees. Thousands of leaves turned to ember, floating like cherry blossoms in the night. Each one was blood red, as they danced in gusts around Isaac, and then turned to a nightly black.

And there she was... the keeper of Isaac's heart. She smiled at him amidst the tranquil blossom petals, as they continued to dance in the spring-like wind, a dreamy white all around.

"Could it really be you? But the lighthouse..."

He sprang for her, only to stop abruptly, as the image of a white clad knight took the girl's stead, and lunged at Isaac in turn. Isaac was completely in awe by the identity of this warrior; and as he stood there, preparing himself to be pounced on by such a gallant figure, the image changed yet again, this time into a blur of brown.

A Forest Wolf ambushed Isaac, his own blood smearing on its fur. It's jaw set into his shoulder, locking into bone.

As the two collapsed, three Oak trees followed, crippled in shards of wood as they snapped in a flash of light—taking the wolf straight into the arms of death...

"My, my... very stupid," a new, dispassionate voice echoed into his dreams. Red eyes locked onto Isaac's stare, and then there was nothing but silence from this stranger.

Isaac awoke gently, dreary still.

The afternoon sun painted the walls of the room, warming him under all the comforters. The blinds of the windowsill were fully opened, no wind entering. Isaac laid there in a large bed, eyes slowly gaining focus. He began to notice the dresser by the window, as well as the vase full of yellow flowers. They were all in full bloom, radiating in the bright sunlight. The vase was white, with small brown horses painted all around.

He continued to look around the room, noticing his scarf hanging on a chair at his bedside. His under shirt was there too, as well as his belt and an *empty* mythrill bag. The scarf too, glowed in the beautiful sunlight, much like the flowers

The blankets were at his chin, and slightly began to chaff at his neck. One of them was wool, a winter's comforter that found its way into the room by accident. He noticed then that most of his body was bandaged, his shoulder, his side, as well as his head. Some of his golden hair poked out on the sides, small clumps hanging out of the white of the band around his head. His right eye was also covered up.

Isaac couldn't remember how he had gotten here. Miraculously, he was not dead. He sat up, hearing people talk below. They were having a conversation, as he presumed. He got out of bed, searching for his boots. He quickly slipped into them, and stood firmly on the hardwood floor.

"Oh my," a young girl said, spooking Isaac a little. She seemed to be a year or two younger than him, and was blushing slightly at the young man. "Maybe it would be better if you went back to bed. My mom will be finished mending your clothes in a while."

Isaac realized that he had made her uncomfortable, wearing only his under shorts and boots. He quickly slipped off the boots from his feet, and slowly returned to the bed.

"Wait," he said before she closed the room door.

"I'm sorry," she apologized. "I shouldn't have just walked into your room like that. I had thought you were still asleep, and was just checking up. Next time I'll knock." she smiled, peeking through the doorway from outside in the hall.

"How did I get here?" he asked her.

"Hmm?" she was startled by his question, raising both eyebrows at him. She quickly brought them down, replying, "You were brought here by your travelling companion."

She quickly clapped both hands together, remembering something important.

"Which also reminds me, my father was asked that you were kept in bed until her return. It was a hefty tip she gave us, which was why my mom decided to return the favour by repairing your clothes. It was your traveling companion who addressed your wounds"

"Who?" Isaac asked in confusion, staring out the window.

"Stay in bed." the girl trailed off, as she adjusted her headband and then closed the door behind her.

Isaac sat under the blankets, still looking out the window. He began to pinch at the white cloth around his head, still wondering what the girl meant by travelling companion. He could hear the birds chirp outside, as well as the towns people go about with their daily lives.

He closed his eyes as he pinched the bridge of his nose. His mind wandered off as he found himself thinking of the past few days. He began to think of Gareth and Ivan, and even began to hear their voices in his head. The last thing he could remember was all of them huddled around the secret entrance of the lighthouse.

He had remembered all the Laliverian workers at the metal doors, and how Ivan tried to negotiate their status with Feran. He remembered himself and Mia debating on using psynergy, and how Gareth just stood there arms crossed in

front of the entrance. He sighed as he continued to think back.

Mia. His thoughts were interrupted as he saw the mental image of her running towards him...

In fact, that was the last thing he remembered before waking up now. He had no idea why he was so badly injured now, but had gained new hope that maybe the others were with him. Maybe Mia was with him. Maybe the others had brought him here, and tended to him while he was passed out. Expectation within him grew, as he got out of bed once again. The room's door began to open for a second time, as Isaac just stood there.

"Please, my companion, what did she look like? Do you remem..." he began to ask.

A different woman entered. She was not the same girl as before, and she had not been Mia. She looked far more different, and carried a serious face. She looked up at him, but did not make eye contact as she left the door slightly ajar.

She walked to the other side of the bed and reached for the chair. Isaac's belongings were lifted from it, and dropped to the cushions. The woman looked up to Isaac, red eyes still serious. Unlike the other girl, this one wasn't embarrassed or uncomfortable with Isaac only wearing under shorts. It was not as if she liked him, it was just that she couldn't be bothered with his appearance.

She dragged the chair behind her, and took a seat looking out the window. She sat there in the sun, brisk light draping her.

She had short hair, and a bright cape. Her eyes were a varying red, and her skin had a hint of violet, somewhat matching her attire.

The door squeaked a little, for it was still left slightly open. She just sat there though. Her legs were crossed, the top leg slowly bobbing up and down, arms crossed as well. Isaac walked to the door, looking back at her once more. Her breathing was slow, folded arms moving up and down.

Isaac closed the door, staring at the knob. The slightest of smirks was heard.

"Most people would have left," she said, strong eyes staring at him now.

"Most people can't afford the most expensive room at this inn. In fact, many people wouldn't have been strong, or sympathetic enough to carry an unconscious stranger back to Lalivero.... I recognize this inn now."

"I suppose it *was* quite the journey," she said, "I only arrived here upon day break."

"For that I am indebted to you. But how did you find me? Were there any others?"

"I saved you from a wolf attack last night, and as far as I know, you were alone." The woman didn't even sympathize with the sad look on his face.

"My name is Isaac." Isaac stood there, waiting for her name in return. It never came. She quickly changed the subject.

"I've also purchased the room next to this one. It's smaller, but still decent enough. You can move there. However it's

been paid for only one night. I myself am leaving tomorrow." she continued to sit there, returning her stare to the window.

"That is more than kind of you, but..." Isaac looked to his possessions sprawled on the bed and felt guilty as he realized he had lost his money.

"I don't expect you to compensate for the purchases, I *noticed* that you don't have any money." she said, inspecting her nails to check if they were clean.

"I can't allow you to do all this for me with nothing in return"

"Its quite fine," she sighed " but maybe you could answer me this: Why were you lingering in the woods near the lighthouse ruins?" Her eyes became sharper, as she studied him for a response.

"I don't know why..." Isaac said shakily under his breath. He hadn't really known why, but it was as if he had forgotten something.

"No one has journeyed near there since the quake, all except a young girl in this town." she pressed on, waiting for another response.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that the people in this region are afraid of getting too close. They believe that the tower was the cause of the earth quake."

"Then why were you there... and what do you mean by quake?" Isaac asked, grabbing his undershirt.

"I'm... looking for someone... It seems as if you know less than I had initially thought." she sighed, standing up. "When

your clothes are brought up, you're on your own" She walked towards the door, not giving him another look.

"But..." Isaac could sense the disappointed aggravation from her tone, as he realized then that she sought information from him—of which he had no idea of. He felt a guilty, that he wasn't able to repay the favour. He was somewhat worried that maybe now she would think that it was a waste of time saving his life.

The quiet sound of the doorknob's turn was heard, Isaac looking up just in time to see her disappear in a flow of crimson.

The door remained open as she left, leaving Isaac half naked before the innkeeper's daughter once again. The short girl stood there in the hall with his folded clothes. This time however, she was stunned, blushing with mouth slightly open.

"..."

"..."

"..."

sigh...

XXXXX

(**A/N**: though towns look small and simple on the screen, I decided that in this fic they would be larger and more intricate, when applicable. It would be as if the people in Camelot decided to make their GS town appearances simplistic for the game boy advance)

A hefty merchant grazed Isaac's side, slightly putting him off balance.

"Excuse me boy," he said with a jolly laugh, slapping Isaac's back. Another merchant broke out into laughter, accusing the latter of having eaten more than his share of food in his lifetime. Both began to laugh, two others joining as well. The conversations soon continued to personal hygiene, and then lead to an argument as to who had the best prices on carpets.

The market place of Lalivero had become overcrowded since Isaac's last visit, filled with strange merchants, gamblers, and squatters of every kind.

Isaac was spooked again as the same merchant bursted into a furious laugh. The adept bit his tongue, annoyed at his current handicap. His eye was still covered up, leaving him blind on his right side, and at the mercy of any thieving pickpocket. Still the same, he made his way nimbly through the crowd.

Isaac had sold his mythrill bag, as well as a few herbs and potions. They had been liquidated for a decent price, all except the herbs, a few of which had been crushed in his pockets. He had enough money to buy some food, as well as some extra in case of emergency. However Isaac still hadn't a lot of money.

He was upset that his friends were nowhere to be found and that he was the only one alone that night in the woods. He wanted nothing more than to search for them now.

"Those were good findings young lad. Now go fetch your brother and have him buy the last thing on the list. I will be over there buying fruit. Return to me when you are done, and then we'll pick up Jenna."

Isaac stopped abruptly in the middle of the crowd, as his head flung in search of the one that spoke. He had clearly recognized that voice, remembering it from a long time ago.

Isaac stood firm where he was, regardless of the few pressing forward on his back. At the last second, he saw an elderly man standing near the weapons and supplies house. The old man walked the market grounds, separating himself from the massing crowds.

He was distinguished by his furry brow, which was thick and grey on both sides, much like his beard. However he seemed different, his forehead larger as his hairline had receded. He bore upon himself a cane, yet still walked swiftly. He had two bags hooked under his right elbow, both of equal size.

"Kraden..."

Kraden stopped at the edge of the market place, upon a small fruit stand ran by a young girl, hair held back by a bandana.

Isaac walked to a market stand across from the old man, studying him carefully. Kraden sorted through the various fruits, making small talk with the owner. Isaac saw her laugh a couple of times, humouring the old man as he finally chose a few items to purchase.

Another merchant screamed out his wares, his voice drowning into Isaac's right side. The adept quickly spun on the man, completely startled and caught off guard.

"Excuse me" another spoke deeply, slightly shoving against Isaac. The man was tall, with a long face and drooping hair. Not once had Isaac noticed the pickpocket steal his bag of coins...

Isaac was growing annoyed with the newfound popularity of the Laliverion market, and felt relieved as he watched Kraden stroll towards a few houses. He quickly made his way through the crowd, pursuing the old man.

Isaac watched him as he walked; it seemed as if he was making his way to the town's centre. He caught up to him, yet still maintained distance. It soon came to a point in which he had to take action, as he realized Kraden was about to call out to his colleague.

The young Earth adept quickly grabbed the scholar by his shoulders, and directed him into an alley in between two houses.

"What is the meaning of this?" Kraden waved his forearms in circles, cane following. "How dare you! If you are a thief then I must disappoint you, I have nothing of value."

Isaac turned Kraden around, and leaned him against the wall. "You have nothing to worry about, just relax!"

Both Kraden and Isaac were taken a back by the young man's slight loss of temper. Kraden however, was even more surprised at the fact that he was standing before Isaac after so long.

"I... Isaac. Is that you? Could this really be you? But it has been so long. Where have you been?" Kraden clearly expressed his shock and loss at this dilemma.

"Well it's me, and it is good to see you again. However we must act quickly. Please tell me that was Jenna in the town centre!" Isaac peeked over Kraden's shoulder, slightly glancing at an impatient girl standing next to the obelisk. "It had to have been..."

I've found her...and Kraden.

"Is she with Felix? And where are Saturos and Menardi?"

"Saturos? Menardi? Oh my, what has happened to you? Your eye, is it still there? You look as if you've been through a horrific ordeal." Isaac's head began to throb with Kraden's last question.

"Where are your companions? Weren't there others with you?"

"Stop!" Isaac quieted the old man, his migraine growing. He sighed under his own breath, hands pressed against the wall to Kraden's side.

Kraden put a comforting hand on Isaac's shoulder. He was staring at the boy, whose face was concealed by his golden bangs.

"What happened at the lighthouse?"

Isaac's face whipped up from hiding, his eyebrows clearly showing his puzzlement. He smirked abruptly, nose wrinkled and eyebrows still low.

"We didn't even make it to the beacon! How am I supposed to answer that when I wasn't even there? So many people keep asking me about the lighthouse..."

"Isaac, didn't you pursue Felix and the others to the aerie?"

"No... We did make it to the entrance though. I remember walking in and preparing to enter the lighthouse. From there it's a blank. By dusk I found myself lost in the forest, nearly dead. Fortunately I was saved before I passed out, and

brought back here to Lalivero. There was a nameless woman—it took her all of last night to bring me back here."

Kraden was taken a back by all that he had said. He continued to look at Isaac with curiosity, as to whether he was really serious. Kraden began to stroke his beard, other hand still resting on his cane.

"This woman that you speak of, you say that it took her all of last night to bring you here, to the nearest town?"

"Yes, I spoke with her this morning. She hadn't told me her name, but had made it clear that she found me early last night."

"And you remember nothing before that?"

"No."

"Isaac my boy, I need you to think hard for me. Are you absolutely sure?" Isaac peeked over Kraden's shoulder once again, barely having heard the question.

"Kraden she's leaving! Quickly tell me where Felix is, or Saturos and Menardi ... no, more importantly where is Feran's daughter? Kraden I need you to go after Jenna. From there, I will protect you all, as soon as I find Saturos."

"Isaac..."

"I don't know where my friends are, but I've been alone before, during Colosso. If I have to, I can hold my own. I'll take on Saturos first, then Menardi. Alex will be another problem..."

"Alex is gone..." Kraden stopped him from talking, as he made Isaac face him, gently shaking the adept's shoulders.

"He's gone?"

"Yes... he left a couple of weeks ago. He had said that there were rumours of warriors to the far east, lead by a strong man with divine powers, according to the talk among merchants. We suspect that it's an adept. Alex had hoped that it was Felix, which was why he left both me and Jenna so suddenly."

"A few weeks ago you say... and Felix is gone as well? How exactly did he make his way to the far east?"

"Felix is gone, as well as the others, for some time now."

"But then... that doesn't add up? Did they abandon you?"

"We suspect that they all died atop the lighthouse. At least I believe so, though that is most unfortunate to say. Jenna on the other hand has travelled out to the lighthouse every day in search of anyone. She has been most determined these past few months. What can I say, she loves both you and her brother very much, and refused to admit your deaths."

"Kraden?" Isaac quickly dismissed the scholar's ramblings. "Stop with all this nonsense. We must act quickly!" Kraden didn't know what to make of the situation, as he kept on avoiding the inevitable...

"Maybe you should rest for a while; in fact you can return with me to Feran's house. Lalivero may have become overcrowded with outsiders recently, but Feran would still be kind enough to welcome a friend of mine."

"But Kraden," Isaac was annoyed at the way the old man wasn't listening, or even taking the situation seriously. "What about the lighthouse. I've noticed no light whatsoever. Does that mean that the beacon has not been

lit? If so I must return... That's it, I understand now! My companions may still be there, trying to stop the beacon from being ignited! I must leave quickly!" Isaac stated

"There's no way for the beacon to be lit again..."

"What are you talking about? It's as if you speak of things I know nothing of..."

"Jenna will be happy to see you again. She has spent every night worried about the others." Kraden sighed, "I remember the first week she cried to herself every night, only to have her hopes renewed in the morning, as she would set out. I remember when I asked her to accept your deaths and move on, simply because it had been so long a time that passed. She was so stubborn and temperamental."

Isaac stood there, observing the oddness Kraden displayed.

"Nowadays I spend my time humouring her, to avoid any arguments. In all honesty I didn't want to remind her that Felix was gone. She's so innocent. But now! Yes but now, you have returned alive! Though you are not her brother, she will still be glad to hear that you're alive, and for the most part well!" he concluded, looking Isaac up and down, then questioning what he had just said. "Plus you need your rest Isaac,"

The adept listened intently, something of which he hadn't earlier in the conversation.

What am I missing here?

And then it hit him, the inevitable question dawning on him with demand. He had to ask, regardless. In fact, it had struck him so swiftly that even doubt hadn't stopped his query.

"Really Kraden, what is it you're not telling me?"

Kraden removed his spectacles, slowly cleaning the lenses with a handkerchief from his pocket. Isaac had finally put all the pieces together, and Kraden took in a deep breath, preparing himself to become the messenger of ill news.

"Isaac, you've been missing for three months...well, roughly three months. We haven't seen anyone from your party, and Saturos' group has been missing as well. We've gone out in search parties time and time again, but have found no clues as to where any of you had gone. The people of Lalivero have searched hard, but refuse to go anywhere remotely close to the lighthouse. Thus, after all these weeks, we merely presumed that you had either died atop the lighthouse in a struggle, or was killed when the lands ripped to shreds."

The young adept fell back to the wall, confused in shock as a few trembles escaped, running down his hands.

"Shortly after the beacon had been lit, it extinguished. In a few flicks of light, it turned red, and was replaced by a grand inferno. It burned the lighthouse terribly. A grand wave swept the Eastern Sea, and had reached the shores of Gondowan by daybreak the next day." Kraden said in a serious tone. He lifted his glasses above eye level, inspecting them again for smudges. "However the wave never hit land..." he sighed, bringing down the spectacles to inspect them from another viewpoint. "They called it the *Twilight Quake*, an earthquake so great that it tore through the lands like a knife through butter. It was the factor that extinguished the lighthouse fire."

So that was what the woman meant—the quake...

"The earth quake was truly terrible, as it occurred both on the lands, as well as upon the seabed, according to observations. The Twilight quake was so powerful, that even the waters were changed, resulting in a backlash or repercussion of the tidal wave. The tides had traveled southward into a swirl, and continued on back east." he sighed, taking in a deep breath. Kraden was speaking as slowly as he could, trying not to make things any worse for Isaac "Returning to the topic of the quake, a fissure can be found near the lighthouse, stretching on for miles."

"Did Alchemy unleashed do all this?" Isaac inquired, wondering as to whether his suspicions were correct.

"Maybe..." Kraden briefly chuckled to himself, " in fact, the lighthouse stands at the edge of the newly made pit, barely clinging on. Directly below it, according to our studies, is the epicentre of this fault line."

"The fissure, how long is..." Isaac couldn't even finish his question, still distraught in his own right.

(A/N: you may want to consult a GS map for this next part)

"It begins a few miles south of Lalivero, and continues south into parts of the sea. It has even uprooted new formations of land from the seabed, as explorers have found tiny islands south of the lighthouse, containing dead sea creatures and various corals. Quite interesting, though it is sad to say. From there, the fissure line split the continent of Indra completely in two. It entered into the Bay of Daila, near a small village town, and travels further through, according to ours maps, a small temple, and onwards into the Dehkan Plateau."

Isaac turned his back on Kraden, stunned by such a catastrophe.

"It hadn't stopped there... merchants from the south have informed scholars like myself, that the fissure traveled even further, back into the Eastern Sea, then straight into the north-western edges of Osenia, ending at the mountain range before Yampi Desert... However land sections of this earthly crevice have filled with sea water, making things even more unimaginable...there's even a river channel in between the two halves of Indra"

Isaac lost track of the conversation as he saw Jenna walk directly in front of him, seeming somewhat lost. She unknowingly passed them, looking for Kraden.

"Come, we can talk more about this later. Look, there's Jenna. Let us go,"

Kraden began to call out the girl, only to have Isaac quickly turn on him, shoving his palm over the old man's mouth.

"Quiet Kraden!" The scholar stared at him as if offended, then realized that Isaac had other intentions. "She...Kraden, she must not know that I am here..."

A/N: IMPORTANT! In case you were confused, a fissure is a large crack in the earth, like a narrow canyon. I'm not gonna say much more, so just move onto the next chapter. Give me a review though!

Peace and good love

***Chapter 4*: chapter 2: She was nameless II**

Chapter 2 Act 2: She was Nameless

If only... If only this wasn't happening. Why am I even here? What am I trying to prove, or am I even trying to prove anything at all? Would I be proving myself to others, or to me alone? I don't care what others think. They're all beneath me—except her...

And what of my sister? How could she be who she is, and how can I be otherwise? I must find her. Only her answers can help me figure all this out, this apparent world I live in...

"Oh dear sister," she spoke in a raspy, mocking tone, clenching her fist, if only to feel. She sighed to herself with a sad smile, now somber with both her words and smile.

"You've always been the one person to keep me honest... I don't know what I'd do if you weren't there to keep me level-headed."

'A sisterly sheath to this unfinished sword', as mother had used to say, rest her soul.

The nameless woman had thought she was alone in the wood, until the points of her ears twitched, and voices were heard. She quickly swung the crimson of her cloak, pulling up an oversized hood. She always knew how to spoil her own curiosity.

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"Look what I got" the man snickered to himself as he tossed the coin bag up and down in front of the two fellow thieves.

"I lifted it off some foreigner. The kid was all jumpy and stuff in the market place, his eye wrapped up in bandages."

The thief himself stroked his long face, then brushed away his hair, which had been divided on either side of his cheeks.

"You'll also be happy to know that I recognized the little runt from back in Vault. He was the same one that captured us, and took back all our stolen goods."

"You mean that Isaac kid!"

"Yeah," The leader retorted slowly, quietly stretching his pronunciation of the 'e' and 'a'. "He looked different all right, but I know it was him." The three laughed as they tossed around the coin bag, making idiot faces at each other.

"Hello boys..." a woman interrupted their laughter

"What do you want!" one of the thieves snapped.

"This forest has me lost... Can a couple of men like yourselves help me out?" she responded, her raspy voice slipping off her tongue.

"Well," the leader said in a sinister tone, "a couple of guy's like us know how you can find your way... and I'm sure that you'll make it worth our time"

The three began to smirk and make birdcalls, all of them elbowing each other.

"Really..." she said, smiling as she remained in the shadows of her own hood. A foreign weapon dangled at her side, three blunt parts hanging to the figure's knees and grass. There was a quick locking sound, as all three parts

straightened erect, forming a long pole, a curved blade switching out in a glimmer...

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Isaac sat there perched upon the town's wall, facing south, at where the lighthouse had once been. Thick and heavy clouds of smoke surrounded the tower, the lighthouse barely being seen through it all. The canyon-like fissure was also grand, stretching deep into the white smoke. Haze was common over the looming skies, which would remain there for months to come.

Isaac pondered over all that Kraden had said, and debated with himself as to whether he should go through with it all or not. None the less, looking at the lighthouse once more, he stood firm with the decision he had made, and believed it to be right, whether it would hurt her or not...

And then he saw her, walking off into the forest with two boys...

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Kraden watched from the gates, as Jenna disappeared from view, once again in search of Felix or Isaac. She travelled with the two young brothers that would always help Kraden with the market purchases. They had been younger friends of Sheba, and in the past few weeks, grew fond of Jenna. They always hung around her, and sometimes even travelled with her to the lighthouse on her searches.

Kraden took pity on her, and more over, took pity on himself for having done this to her...

Flashback...

"She...Kraden, she must not know that I am here..."

"What do you mean? For what reason would you ever do this to her?"

"The lighthouses...two still remain. Though Alex is the last to be seen from Saturos' party, there is still a threat upon Weyard. And if he is now in search of others, then there is still a chance that the remaining beacons will be lit."

"But the Venus lighthouse is destroyed."

"But at what cost? That lighthouse alone tore the earth apart, as you had clearly said. Just imagine what would happen if the other lighthouses were lit. Kraden, I haven't failed in my mission yet."

"But Jenna, why?"

"If she knew that I were here, and that I would have to set out once again, she would never let me. It would be so much harder on her to see me go. Does she really deserve that? And anyway, you know well enough that she would try and follow me. I can't risk her safety over all this."

"So you will set out once again, in pursuit of the elemental stars...Alone?"

"For now."

"There is more out there than you think though, my boy..."

"Explain."

"The lighthouse gave much more than just an earthquake and tidal wave that day. From its red light, a true disaster was bestowed upon us. From the aerie's womb, a demon

was born, though few believe in it... It's inexplicable, but a curse of great sorts flew down upon the people, in the form of a two-headed dragon..."

"From the aerie?"

"Yes. It burned all of Suhalla, and flocks over the desert and mountain range, destroying all the settlements between Lalivero and Tolbi. The lands of Northern Gondwan have all been burned a settling black."

"A dragon? Have you seen it?"

"No,"

"Then how would you know?"

"There have been a few witnesses from Suhalla that spoke of such, as well as a few from Lalivero. Jenna came close to seeing it one night, though she wasn't quite sure as to what it was. However Alex has, with his own eyes before he left. He was able to convince her that it was nothing. In fact, the reason Alex departed was because what he had seen concerned him—greatly... He even refused to give me detail as to what he actually witnessed, but did however tell me what to look for in my research."

"And did you discover anything?"

"After having asked around, I learned that my fellow scholars found ruins in Loho depicting a mythical beast. Two years ago they came across ancient scriptures speaking of a two headed-dragon. It was called, according to legend, a Fusion Dragon. It's truly a mystery still, for after having recovered these pieces of literature, Lord Babi dismissed them all as fairy tales, and soon sold the lands to mercenary relic hunters and gold diggers. To him, Loho was nothing

more than a profit gain. I fear that he has condemned us all, for since then the ruins have been looted of all priceless goods, leaving barely anything of value. Isaac, you can't do this alone..."

"Yes, I certainly can't. But bringing you and Jenna along won't help me any bit. Right now I'd be better off knowing that the both of you are safe right here."

Isaac turned his back from Kraden, and walked further off into the alley before Jenna's voice could follow, as she was still calling out Kraden's name.

"If you see the dragon," Kraden cried out, Isaac not turning around, "then run—run and don't give it a second thought. Don't even think about heroics, as long as you're alone"

"There you are Kraden! Jenna, I found him!" the little boy screamed.

Kraden sighed to himself again, as he rubbed his forehead. Not only did he pity himself for all that had happened that afternoon, but moreover found himself feeling more sorrow for Isaac. He had deceived the boy. He let Isaac continue on thinking that Alchemy unleashed would cause terrible things. Maybe it would. Maybe not. Maybe it was the cause of the dragon's existence, the earthquake, and the wave.

However none of it changed the fact that plans for the lighthouse's reconstruction were on their way.. None of it changed the fact that he hid this secret from Isaac, and left the boy with his old, narrow minded, Valean beliefs; ignorant from Alchemy's good side and Saturos' old opinion on the matter.

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The night air was restless, swinging the room's blinds back and forth against the windowsill. Isaac slept soundly through its howl, until the voices returned.

Isaac... Isaac...

Then through the darkness of his dream, an eye wide open appeared, looking to all sides. Left, right, left, then straight at him. It seemed to look right through him, as if he was nothing at all. Isaac's bandaged eye began to glow in turn, burning at his cheek.

The star you seek, lies within your fingertips...

the star you have, lies dormant in your reach.

The djinni flocked, in fear of it, yet left what little aid they could...

Flocked in fear of it;

the One.

You;

the earth adept;

the dragon...

"What does this mean?" Isaac groaned in his sleep, restlessness growing as he stirred in bed.

Your answers unanswered, lie at the end of the torn earth, yet not at the depths of the fissure.

Your destiny, lies at the blunt end of the red beast's hammer, yet will die as long as you remain blind, asleep from seeing. The blue haired man you seek is south. He will

lead you to the one that caused the lighthouse's destruction...

Isaac whipped up from bed. His body shook from his chill, the night air cold upon his sweat. He closed the window, and then decided to go down stairs for some tea. *She* was down there, alone.

"Couldn't sleep?" he spoke, so quietly that he wasn't sure if she had heard him. It was the same woman that had saved him from the wolf attack. The nameless one.

"You couldn't stop screaming, I could hear you through the wall." The back of Isaac's neck began to grow warm. He felt confused by her accusations. "There's some tea over there, freshly made. You can have some, as long as you don't talk anymore."

Isaac poured himself a cup, and then lifted a chair off a table, sitting down on it. The woman sat at a bay window looking out. Her eyes were faint in the moonlight, her arms crossed. She held the saucer with her left hand, teacup resting in the middle.

The both of them sat there for a time, until Isaac was done with his first cup. He rose from his seat and went back to the counter for a refill. He noticed that she wasn't drinking anymore, and presumed that she was done as well. Before he poured himself a cup, he brought the tea pot to her and motioned with a nod as to whether she wanted a second serving as well.

She stared with disgust at his attempt of interacting with her, and began to ask herself if he was for real. Isaac was dead serious, and the long awkward pause became too much for her. The woman clasped her mouth with a knuckle, looking away from him.

She couldn't allow him to see that she was on the brink of a detached laugh. She smirked once, and closed her eyes in pity at his sad attempts. Finally she looked up, and couldn't believe Isaac's confused stare.

The both of them stared at each other, her eyes rolling as she lifted the saucer. He poured her some tea, halfway before realizing that the pot was empty.

She sighed at the awkwardness of it all, and then finally gave up.

"Do you know how to make tea?" Isaac gave her an agreeing nod, then turned around, walking towards the counter again.

"Who are you looking for?" Isaac asked, nearly speaking in a whisper. He was curious, for it seemed like there was more to it.

"I thought you agreed not to talk? Personally I've heard enough of you tonight, screaming and what not."

Isaac shrugged at her rudeness, struggling with the pouch of tealeaves.

The silence hurt Isaac's ears, as well as the woman's. The candle flickered on the counter top, nearly burning out.

It was then that Isaac felt the strange presence of psynergy, as the candlewick began to burn stronger than before, giving him more light to sort through the tea bag. He merely disregarded the feeling as he began to heat more water.

Finally, she broke the quiet of the late night.

"Why is it you scream at night? I remember the night before when I was carrying you here. You were having nightmares

then as well." Isaac didn't respond. "Well, explain to me why you woke me up?"

"I thought I wasn't to talk?" Isaac responded sarcastically.

"You aren't, as long as I don't address you first."

Isaac slightly grinned at her callousness, pinching the bridge of his nose.

"I didn't know that I screamed at night. Exactly what is it that I scream about?"

"You scream out for someone to run, for her to take the star and run. You also scream about a fire, and a giant eye speaking to you in riddles..."

Isaac thought about what she was telling him, suddenly remembering his nightmare.

"You scream about the lighthouse..."

"So was that why you were asking me about it this morning?"

"Yes"

"Believe it or not, I don't know why," he sighed, dropping the leaves into the pot of hot water. "In fact, I learned today that I've been missing for three months. It was as if I hadn't existed. I'm sorry that I don't have the answers you looked for"

"So you don't know where you've been all this time?"

"No, I had just found out about all the things that happened recently." Isaac responded, walking back to her and filling the rest of her cup.

"Three months you say," she asked, lowering her eyelids as she took a sip.

He walked back to his table, and poured himself some more tea. Isaac gently put down the pot when he was finished, the wood of the table creaking in the night. He wrapped his hands around his own cup, warming himself.

"So you disappeared when the lighthouse was lit?"

"I suppose." he said, curling his lip from a shiver.

"Interesting."

"What about you? Where were you when all of this happened?"

"I was in Suhalla." she responded, taking another sip.

"I heard that Suhalla was destroyed shortly after."

"Yes, it was burned. I was fortunately not there when it happened. I had already made it to Lalivero at that time."

"Then you didn't see the Fusion Dragon?" Isaac pressed on.

She began to laugh at his comment, as if humouring at his stupidity. "Dragon? Don't tell me that you believe in such rumours? Just because you were disposed of these past few months is no reason to believe in such childish fantasies—a two-year-old fairytale from Loho." It was apparent that she knew well enough about the rumours. Afterall, she had been in Lalivero for some time now.

"A man I trust told me of it, and I believe him."

"Maybe you believe that he believes in such," she cooed mockingly. "None have seen this dragon your friend speaks

of."

"Maybe because none have lived to tell about it."

She did not have a comeback for him, and merely looked out the window again, straight at the moon. She glowed in its light, the faint lavender of her skin blending with night's darkness and moon's image. She seemed tired. She truly was, with it all...

There was a long period of silence.

Though Isaac was by no means attracted to her, for that one moment in time he thought she was fairly beautiful. The other times he was around her she was always cold and rude, face wrinkled ugly. Now she just seemed tired and relaxed. He hadn't known her long, barely a day. He was fortunate though, to see this rare side of her.

"At least do me the decency of telling me your name. You did save me and everything." Isaac sighed, partially talking to himself, partially asking her the question. She did not answer. "My name is Isaac." he sighed to himself once again.

"Do you really think I care?" she retorted, turning her head towards him from rest. "And I thought we had an agreement? Did I ask you to talk?"

Isaac shuddered to himself as his thoughts of a few moments ago were forgotten, her cold red eyes staring at him with anger. Apparently he had once again disturbed her sleep.

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The *woman* woke up at the innkeeper's tug. Both he and his daughter were looking at her with curiosity—that she had

slept downstairs. She gave him an evil look, and then gave the girl one as well.

"Sorry little lady, but I have a business to run down here."

She began to stand, stopping when she realized that a blanket had been pulled up to her chin. She wondered why that was. She looked around the main level of the inn, but Isaac was nowhere in sight.

"Wow. Since when do people buy the most expensive room at an inn, then decide to sleep in the main hall downstairs?" the daughter asked herself.

The woman gave her an evil stare, and was about to insult the younger girl, until she picked up on her stare. The shorter girl had forgotten about her own comment, as she stood there staring out the window, slightly blushing.

"What are you looking at?" the woman asked, turning her head.

Isaac was outside, talking to a few Tolbian soldiers. He stood there scratching his head, giving them questioning looks.

She rose to her feet and made her way to the main doors, the innkeeper's daughter in tow.

"How did you know where to find me?" Isaac asked aloud.

"One of Lord Babi's scholars informed us late last night. He said that you found your way back to Lalivero," one of the men answered.

Kraden...

"You've been gone for quite some time Master Isaac. Lord Babi has searched for you plenty, but had believed you to be dead. It is also surprising to find you alone."

"Please, has anyone under Babi's services seen or heard from my companions?" Isaac asked. The soldiers looked to the ground and slowly shook their heads.

"We've all been quite busy," the lead soldier responded, "during the igniting of the lighthouse, a great battle ensued upon our forces. Nearly half of our soldiers in the desert were wiped out by an ominous blue haired man. The death rate would have been greater, if not for him leaving before the battle's end. Since then, what's left of our soldiers have been dispersed in flocks, between here and Tolbi, searching the lands. We are trying to aid those whose homes have been burnt, as well as search the mountain ranges. Most of our forces however are stationed back home protecting Tolbi and sorting through refugees."

"I see. Lalivero has taken in some refugees as well." Isaac observed, looking around a few times.

"Yes, many people have travelled from Indra as well, seeking safety from the one continent that had split in half. Northern Gondowan is growing overpopulated."

Isaac thought to himself a bit, before noticing the two girls at the inn door. "Does Babi believe in this dragon scare that has rumoured lately?"

"It is not our place to say, but something terrible must have burned the lands west of here, that's for sure."

"Then I will meet Iodem at the docks, as you've requested." Isaac said, grazing his sideburns with his thumbnail. The

three soldiers saluted him, then turned their backs and walked away. Isaac returned to the inn as they left.

"Hi!" the innkeeper's daughter yelled as he entered the doors.

"Hello," he responded, not looking up as he made his way to his room.

XXXXX

Isaac was downstairs eating breakfast when he noticed *her* coming down the stairs, crimson cape flowing at her footsteps. He had a loaf of bread in his mouth, and felt a little embarrassed as he noticed Lila, the innkeepers' daughter, watch him intently.

He watched the woman walk through the room, slightly giving him a glance before she left.

Isaac finished up his soup, and thanked the innkeeper for his hospitality. He said goodbye, and couldn't help but cock an eyebrow at Lila as she followed him to the door.

Isaac walked out the inn, stopping a few paces ahead. He turned around and saw Lila behind him, frowning a little. She slightly waved to him, looking down at the ground as the front of her shoe dragged playfully in the dirt. He felt some sympathy for the girl, and tugged at his golden scarf.

"Here, thanks for everything. I'll see you around!" he said tenderly, handing her the slightly torn scarf. She blushed at the token he gave her, and continued staring at him quietly.

There was an awkward pause, sweat dripping down Isaac's neck. He didn't want her to think that he was leading her on or anything, but couldn't help but feel for her. She was very

shy towards him ever since she saw him half naked that second time, and how she just stood there stiffly without reaction.

Isaac began to reminisce, as he turned his back on the girl. He thought back to a time when he was in a similar situation as her; that he was exactly like her in the past, when he first visited Imil. He thought of Mia, and swore to himself that he would find her...

He walked off, following the footsteps of the *one* that had gone before him.

"Goodbye! Come back any time!" Lila yelled, as he began to walk farther off. She had tied the scarf close to her neck so that it chaffed her chin.

XXXXX

The young Valean had caught up to the *woman* as they made their way to the northern gates. He had no idea as to why he was following her, and it seemed as if she hadn't cared.

"You dirty vandal thieves!" one soldier screamed, kicking the tied up men.

The three thieves sat there in the dirt, their hair uneven as if chopped off in clumps.

"That stupid wench" one of the thieves screamed as he spit out dirt from the corners of his mouth.

Isaac looked through an opening in the crowd at the three arrested thieves. He hadn't recognized them from Vault, mainly because of their new 'haircuts'.

"She ruined my hair!" another screamed.

Isaac wondered in curiosity at who those men were and why they were tied up. He continued to walk though, trailing behind the woman.

"Which reminds me," she spoke, interrupting his thoughts. "I believe this is yours," she said, tossing a coin bag over her shoulder. She had her walking stick resting on the back of her neck and shoulders, lying horizontally with her hands hanging on top.

"How did you..."

"I didn't steal it if that's what you're thinking," she responded coldly.

Isaac slipped the bag into his blue vest, not giving another thought to any of it.

"Just like that, you're so trusting?" she said stopping, letting him pass in front. "You don't even want to count it?"

"There wasn't a lot anyways. I have no reason to doubt you," he spoke, "I prefer to think that there is *some* good in you" he continued to jest.

She was amused at his trusting and kindly nature.

XXXXX

Isaac had made it to the tiny harbour slightly north of Lalivero. However in the process he had lost *her*. He had no idea as to where she had disappeared. Isaac had found a strange ship with a dragon's head in the front, shortly upon his arrival. Tolbian soldiers guarded it, and he had recognized Iodem at the docks end.

It was then that he remembered it to be the same Lemurian ship Iodem had shown him before.

"Are we to set sail?" Babi's Chief minister questioned when Isaac drew close enough to hear his words.

"I suppose," Isaac replied, turning to give one last look around for her. He hadn't noticed Iodem grinning from cheek to cheek, happy to see that Isaac was alive.

"What troubles you?"

"It is good to see you Iodem, but much troubles me," he responded, remembering all of his burdens.

"Retail me of such then"

"For one thing, I am lost without my companions. For another, I have been lost for a time, not remembering a thing these past few months. Not to mention that I must leave both Jenna and Kraden here. And then there's that nameless woman who saved me, lest the fact that I had no sleep at all last night." Isaac recounted, thinking of the night before. His conversation with the woman had reminded him of his dream, and where he had to go now in accordance to the vision...

Isaac hesitated for a moment. He thought about all that he had just said, as poetic words were the first thing to come to mind, summarizing the way he felt now.

I am a bird with no song...things were never suppose to turn out this badly...

"But are you well enough to set out and search for Lemuria?" Iodem persisted.

"My friend," Isaac began, as he motioned for the ship's ladder, "I don't believe we have time to humour Lord Babi. Weyard has seen better days, and we must help it now, rather than follow in an old man's request at a trivial escapade. If you trust me, and wish to stay true to your vow to aid me whatever way you can, then follow me now in my quest." Isaac's voice trailed off as he reached the ship's deck.

Iodem looked at the black orb he had in hand, reaching for the ladder. He began under his breath; "it is now an old man, lying in his death bed that you speak of young master..."

"So," one of the soldiers on deck spoke as Isaac cleared the ladder and approached the group, "how does this boat work?"

XXXXX

The ship had now set sail, leaving the docks with Isaac, Iodem, and a few other soldiers as its crew. Isaac had promised them that nothing like the Twilight Quake would ever happen again, as long as they followed him in his mission. He had promised that if there were a dragon out there, he would be the one to stop it.

Isaac reflected on the dream he remembered, looking back at the docks from the rear of the ship. At the last second he saw her, standing there at the end of the pier.

She stood there, walking stick still resting on her shoulders, wrists hanging casually over the wood on either side. Her right leg was straight, leaning all her weight on it as the other was bent on its toes.

The wind gently fluttered his golden hair, and began to throw the woman's crimson cape into tiny ripples. Neither of them waved to each other.

She turned on her heel, and began to walk away, head tilted to one side, slightly looking back at the leaving ship.

Isaac knew that was her way of saying farewell, for now... He knew that there was no need for goodbyes, for there was the strange feeling that they would see each other again. Isaac knew that she was thinking the exact same thing, which was why they barely even gave each other a nod.

She smirked in disgust again, as she walked further.

"My name is Karst," she spoke under her own breath, the docks wind blowing the quiet words in its draft, straight out to sea...

A/N: This is not a KarstxIsaac fic. I just wanted to clarify that. So yeah, on the topic of Karst, right now she was left in mystery. She's not as crazed as she was in the game, yet, so please give her a chance! Things come in time I suppose, if they do at all (wink wink). But I can tell you this though. I had great ambitions for her weapon! You will hear about it next time. **Please R&R.** I appreciate your commentary.

***Chapter 5*: chapter 3: fateful encounters I**

A/N: As promised: My interpretations on Karst's weapon. To make things more interesting, I came up with some fanfic weapon designs. Here it is.

She has a scythe. The staff part itself is hollow, with a linked chain inside. The long part of the stick is made up of three individual wood parts enclosing the chain. Thus, it can fold up and dis-enlock (made that word up). As for the chain itself, it is somewhat longer than the staff, yet its extra length is coiled up when the weapon is turned into a scythe. At one end of the chain is a spherical weight; while at the other end is a curved blade, actual scythe. All in all, it has 2 forms: a grim reaper type of weapon, while the second option resembles a "flail"(look that up), with the chain in between blunt parts a little longer, as well as extra chain at both ends, a scythe on one end and a weight on the other. If you still don't get it, the second option is a combo between a flail and ninja chain weapon. With all of that being said, she can fold the three woods parts together, and wrap the chain around, tucking in the blade. Afterwards, she carries it in a purse.

Yes, that was very thorough, I know.

Chapter 3, Act 1: Fateful Encounters

Isaac could only imagine that Indra had once been beautiful. Iodem himself had never left the confines of Gondwan or Angara, but a few of the men spoke of the landscapes Indra had once had. Two of the men had been born in Madras and migrated to become soldiers for Babi. Those same two

regaled the others and lodem of the rolling hills and winding rivers of the continent.

They were so puzzled however, when lodem had told them that they would set sail right through it. Indra had been split in two, a new river passage forming. The two were even more surprised to see it all with their own eyes, as well as return to a homeland they no longer recognized.

The Lemurian ship had entered the Dailan Bay hours ago, the ship nearly halfway in its journey through the continent. It was day two since they had set sail. In various parts of the channel the seawater had not leaked in enough, leaving chance for the ship to run a ground. This left all the crewman, save Isaac, busy enough on deck.

The hero of Vale had found comfort sitting on one of the ships crates, elevated over the hard wood floors. The crate was near the back, among many, and was well out of the way of the pre-occupied crewmen. It was leaned against the cabin, not quite matching its height—the top of Isaac's hair reaching the top ledge.

Isaac had fallen asleep a few times already, but would always stir awake again. His eye was constantly irritated. All the bandages he once wore were now removed, except for the one wrapped over his right eye. lodem had examined his face before, and advised him that it would be best not to remove the white strip yet. After all, Isaac was still waking up in the morning with sharp pains in that area. He continued to pinch at the cloth until finally the itch passed. The adept rested his head back on interlaced fingers, and couldn't help but look on at the various landscapes that passed him by.

Overall towering cliffs on either side defined the passage. At times the cliffs sank low, barely any rock formations defining it. It was obvious that these sections had once been either grassy plains or thinning forestry. On some occasions tree trunks were found scattered along the river, still thick with leaves. This posed as one of the many tasks and hazards the crewmen had to deal with, sorting through them for safe passage.

However now in their journey, the cliff sides were towering over the ship, as though low-lying mountains had been there before.

Isaac could only imagine that Indra had once been beautiful. However he did not mean to insult its present state now, for the lands still held beauty. The passage itself even caught an eye or two.

"Hmm... There should have been a temple somewhere near here..." Iodem stated as he reflected on the map once again.

"Sir!"

"...Call Master Isaac, he may wish to see this."

XXXXX

The Proxian sat there in the corner, flipping a coin between his fingers repeatedly. He rested his bold cheek on his other fist, looking out of the dark booth at the massing casino crowd. Tolbi was not to his liking at all.

Agatio was of a stern determined sort, rather angry with himself that so much time had passed him by. He was empty handed in his *hunt*, and concluded that this robust town had nothing more to offer.

Thus, he got up and left, never to return.

XXXXX

The Kandorean Temple was before Isaac and the men, half of the structure preserved atop the cliff, while the other side laid in rubble along the channel, bricks everywhere on a mound of sand that poked out of the water. A few makeshift boats were sprawled before the Lemurian ship, each one with a monk or two paying homage.

Before Iodem could call out to them, to see if they needed aid, he was stopped—as Isaac's hand rested on his shoulder.

"Isaac?"

The earth adept had made eye contact with the eldest of the monks, and at the last second hushed Iodem. Isaac looked out at the lead monk, his eye watering with its own staring intent. He had barely blinked, as the details of the image filled his mind. His sight almost seemed natural to him, as if he had the use of two good eyes.

Then again...

Isaac thought, as he pinched at the white bandage, sighing. He looked down with his good eye, regaining eye contact with the monk. There was a comforted understanding between the two, though not a gesture was shared.

The elderly man had a thinly frame, and was bald, a few dark patches on his scalp. His face was wrinkled to the point in which he appeared musing and soulful to others.

The old man motioned to the other monks to clear the passage, in which they did. He took one last look at Isaac as the ship cautiously made its way between the small boats.

Isaac looked down returning the stare, then turned from the deck's side.

"Such a catastrophe." one of the men said looking on at the ruined temple. "Don't you think that these monks would be better off somewhere else, like in a town with aid?"

"They're fine as they are," Isaac whispered sympathetically, "leave them to their homage."

The boat moved on steadily, until the sight of the temple disappeared from view. All the monks returned to their meditations, as if they had not been disturbed at all. Meditation periods were sacred to these monks.

"Master, if it is wise of me to ask, why do you appear so troubled?" Master Po's top disciple asked.

"I am not troubled... just delightedly curious." The younger monk looked at him in confusion. "The golden haired boy there, among all the men..."

"Yes"

"I could feel it when I saw him. That boy. Not only is his potential for greatness unimaginable..." the Master Po chuckled to himself, "it's almost guaranteed. He'll soon live up to it—this greatness I see... He is the 'One'. If there were ever to be a 'one' out there in existence, then it is he. Clearly it is, and so clearly I see..."

The student bowed in respect to his master's talented foresight. Master Po had seen quite an oddity that day, and though he had not meant to, or expected to, he perceived much of Isaac's future to come...

XXXXX

The hall was eerily quiet. A few servants walked by now and then, but barely made a noise above a whisper when they treaded. A handmaid walked out of Babi's chamber, carrying a tray of tea and cookies, while another was behind her, carrying a few towels and dirty sheets. Still no word.

The man looked up at the polished walls and patterned ceilings. He continued to look around, soon staring at the bluish marble floors and exotic carpet that ran the same length as the hall. He looked up across from him as he noticed the boy was getting restless. The boy was young, and appeared anxious waiting with him in the hall. The soldier had thoughts of letting him go outside and wait there; at least the youth could entertain himself outside rather than be unhappy here. The kid was aged eight; years short away from manhood, but still a worthy squire.

Finally, the doctor came out...

He tucked his bag under his arm, looked up to all that had waited outside, and then shook his head.

"I see... he doesn't have long then" the head of the scholars said.

"What are we to do now?" the Dean of 'Babi's Academy' spoke up, stepping in front of the soldier.

A few other members of the mayor's council stepped up too, questioning the doctor. They were all debating as to whether the doctor's diagnostic could possibly be inaccurate.

"Come, we've heard what we needed to hear" the soldier motioned to the boy, signalling their leave. He was a soldier. A General yes, but in all honesty, he felt as if he had no place among all these scientists, teachers, and head workmen.

"Yes, I am following" the boy piped up.

"Wait, you must not leave yet..." Iodem's temporary substitute in the council cried out. The soldier turned around, locking eyes with the white haired man.

"It is done," he said outstretching his hand, a scroll gripped tightly in it. "You are needed, the *three* of you. Babi has signed it, meaning that Tolbi itself demands of it."

He gave a peculiar look at the old man, then gave another peculiar look at the scroll. The boy thought that now was the time in which he was to perform his services as a squire, so instinctively bridged the gap to the elder, took the scroll, and returned to the General. He stood beside him, opened it, and began to read aloud.

"By obligation to Tolbian word of Law, it has been found wanting that Tolbi is in need of order whilst Lord Mayor Babi has fallen to ailment. Rule must be maintained, and thus so, in accordance to the 'Legislative Code', Chief Minister Iodem must provide temporary rule of Tolbi's home front, as well as the few settlements and soldiers abroad." The boy spoke openly and as loud as he could. There was a slight pause before he continued. "Though this is true to be said, Chief Minister Iodem cannot perform his duties, for it is evident that he is on leave under Babi's orders. Thus, rule of power must be handed over to Vice Minister Clin"

"That's you," the soldier pointed outward at the white haired man, "and if you are worried about my take on all this, then don't be. I recognize your authority" The General began to turn slightly, before he felt compelled to stop...

"However" the boy spoke at his loudest, focused only on the scroll. He caught everyone's attention with this surprise continuity of the parcel. "There are rumours of..."

The boy was stopped short of reading further, as the soldier reached out his hand, requesting the scroll from the boy. He handed it over to his mentor, respectful of the fact that his job was done for now. The soldier scanned through the contract until he found the line in which the boy had stopped at. It read:

However, there are rumours of a dragon that threatens Tolbian way of life. Whether it can be argued that there is truth to this—sceptics or neigh, It can be agreed on that a plague has befallen the lands of Weyard. Moreover it is cautious to presume that chances of danger hitting close to home are likely. With this in mind, as well as a subject on hand, new measures must be taken. The Council of Tolbi supports the notion of acting as if in times of war. The Council also supports Babi's demand for the 'War Defence Pact' to be upheld.

"What does it say?" the boy pondered aloud. The youth had been admiring him all the while as the General read. The boy looked on in wonder at the gallant purple armour his mentor adorned himself in. It was his trademark apparel, his signature image on and off the battlefield. His under cassock and leggings were a leaf like green, covered over with apron like wooden armour, trimmed in violet, matching his boots and gloves. The face guard of his helm was a deeper contrasted purple, while atop the actual helmet was a bright magenta Mohawk like tassel.

The General did not answer the boy, and instead chose to continue reading.

The War Defence Pact clearly states that in times of war, or in situations as to when Tolbi is threatened, full command is passed on from the head ruler to the officials in charge of Defence. Continuing, Tolbi forces are maintained and upheld

by 'Tolbi's big three'. Having all this been said, under the law of 'The War Defence pact' leadership of Tolbi, as well as maintaining protection for its people, civil and foreign, must be given to Navampa, of the big three.

Signed,

Lord Mayor Babi

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"Sir, I am still following!" the youth almost yelled as they walked out of Babi's palace. The General stopped in his tracks, standing there in the grass, arms crossed as he thought. "Sir! I read the rest of the scroll as you left. I have it now with me" the boy confessed, handing it over.

"Was that why you straggled behind?"

"Yes. But doesn't all this mean that... Sir you are now the leader of Tolbi!" he announced the obvious yet again to the General. "Sir?"

The man looked up thinking of all that had been decided.

War...

He thought somewhat with pride. He felt honoured, almost satisfied that his true potential had chance to be well lived again. He was content with it all, and swore to do his best.

War...

He thought again, looking down on the boy. The youth was smiling cheekily at the fact that his mentor was now being honoured for his rank. He soon resumed face though.

The boy... Admitting war was both a good thing, as well as a bad. No, it was only bad...

"Um...Sir?" the squire said, almost breaking the stern appearance he tried his best at maintaining.

It was only bad...

"The docks..." the soldier said regaining his composure.
"Ships from Kalay will be docking tomorrow. I'm expecting company from there. Search the docks for a group of soldiers when it arrives. Bring them to the town centre tomorrow afternoon; I will be awaiting you there. Until then, go off and spend some time with your friends or something."

"Company..." the boy whispered under his breath in thought, seeming as if to memorize his orders. "Yes!" he said, nodding to the General. "Tomorrow!"

XXXXX

It was a chilled night upon the deck of the Lemurian ship. It sailed warily between the open waters of the sea and the eastern shore of Indra, just south of the river-channel's end. The sea air was restlessly silent, mildly blowing the stench of rotting wood out from the beach. The smell belonged to the remains of a destroyed ship, of which no one knew why or how it was now found ruined along the coast, invisible in the night. However the moon was up, and with it a beautiful shimmer on the sea's surface, as if thousands of diamonds were sown into the fibres of the water.

A voice was calling out to him, a siren of the night, her voice carried by the gently silence of the breeze. It was not long though, before a pessimistic lodem distracted him.

XXXXX

Where are you? Are you thinking of me tonight?

"I miss you. All..." The words escaped her pursed lips at a whisper, almost echoing off the silent walls of her dark room. Her voice sprang out the window that she knelt before, as she reached out to the open stars with eyes alone, drinking in their beauty, yet not concealing her concerned tears—of which were kept from falling, for she was strong enough to do so. "Do you miss me? Could you ever miss me... or have I already been forgotten?"

Jenna's slender figure, as it was casually dressed in a rose nightgown, knelt loosely beneath the stars, expressing her own surrender. The flower-petal smoothness of her forearms rubbed against the dry window ledge, as she was restless in her prayer. Each of her fingers were locked into one another, in an act she had done night after night. She took in a deep breath through her delicate nose, as she rubbed the tip of her finger against a soft pink nail, slightly anxious with her fidget.

"Are you waiting for me, as I am waiting for you... all." She looked down with disappointment as she carefully reminded herself to add in that last word, 'all'. She knew well enough to keep on reminding herself of that word, for there were many she was concerned for, and not just one person.

"Goodnight then," she spoke to the moon, hoping that she would be heard. She drearily lifted herself, smoothening out the wrinkles of pink.

They're still out there...Felix, Garet, Isaac—and even my parents...I can't give up on them. No one can make me give up on them, not until I know the truth, whether they are dead or not...I will not forget, not again. Not the way I did when I was a child...

I promise.

XXXXX

Early the next day...

"You there! Hold your ground!" a man shouted from the Madras gates. There was another with him, both seeming to be the town's guards.

Isaac looked to Iodem, both of them alone. The other soldiers were still at the southern docks, tending to the boat. They were of course to follow their leaders shortly after.

"What's the problem?" Iodem asked returning eye contact.

"Just wait there!" the second guard said approaching the two. He inspected them with a keen eye, as carefully as he could, while the other guard watched them from the gates.

"They don't look like they're Champa..." the first guard finally concluded to the other.

"I agree..." the second one said.

"Sorry for the delay. You may pass." the first guard continued, eyes not leaving Iodem.

"What was the need for this?" Iodem questioned.

"Our town was..." the first guard answered before he stopped. "Was, was..." He continued to inspect Iodem. "The sash you have? Are you from Tolbi?" Isaac and Iodem looked at each other in curiosity to the guard's curiosity.

"Yes, I am Chief Minister Iodem." The man declared. He looked to Isaac once again, as he noticed the Valean slightly elbowing him. He thought for a bit, and then realized what

Isaac was motioning for. "Ah, yes. As a head official of Tolbi, I request conference with the mayor of Madras."

"You are lucky then," the second guard interrupted. "him and his son have just returned from Alhafra. They were on leave for a time, but had returned yesterday afternoon. I will be happy to take you to the mayor's house."

Iodem and Isaac nodded to each other, as they began to follow the second guard.

"Guard." Isaac said as he passed the one who had inspected them. "More soldiers will be arriving soon, about nine others. They are with us as well." the adept said, worried that there may be future inconvenience for them, and the guards. The first guard nodded to him.

"So, what are Champa?" Iodem asked as the second guard led them into the town.

"Oh yes. Months ago our town was sacked by pirates... They came a few days after the huge earthquake, in an attempt to free their leader Briggs. They took advantage of all the confusion, and succeeded. Man! That earthquake was unbelievable wasn't it! Not to mention that huge crack! Indra is now split in two!"

"Yes I know of the earthquake, but please, continue"

"Yeah well they took back their boat from the harbour and set sail once again. We had thought that they would return to all their pirating."

"So did they?" Isaac asked, including himself in the conversation.

"Well, there came a day in which the huge Champa ship was found in the northern beaches, close to the mouth of the fissure. The ship was a wreck. Completely destroyed. In fact it wasn't a ship at all. Just wreckage along the beach."

"Huh..." Isaac thought curiously to himself, remembering the odd smell of driftwood that he smelt the night before.

What could have done that?

"The tides Master Isaac" Iodem said, almost reading his mind. In actual fact, he had read the confused expression on the young man's face. "A great tidal wave was meant to hit the lands. Instead, an earthquake came first, repelling the waters."

"So?"

"Master Isaac, the huge wave traveled into a cycle, back eastward. It swirled around the Eastern Sea, before dieing down. However it had caused so much change, that the sea currents grew terrible in their own right. For two months there was nothing but storm after storm. I witnessed such day in and day out from the docks of Lalivero."

Isaac hadn't known this. When he had discussed what had happened with Kraden, the elder had failed to mention the eastern storms with such detail.

"So I believe that it was the currents that had destroyed the Champa boat." Iodem concluded. They had reached the stairs of the mayor's house and stopped.

"Yeah," the guard agreed. "But only one body was found along the beachside. He was a strange, blue haired man. He didn't seem to say much, but we know he's from Champa."

The guard turned around and began to walk up the stairs. He turned again. "Wait here you two."

The two stood there quietly thinking. Isaac had his arms crossed, whilst Iodem began to pace back and forth.

"Master Isaac. Why have we travelled this far south? What business do we have here, and with this Mayor?"

Isaac was deep in thought, not listening to a word he said. In all honesty, Isaac's traveling plans were always based on instinct.

The guard returned down the stairs, shaking his head. "I regret to inform you that the mayor is still tired from his excursion, and will not be able to meet with you. However he would be more than happy to talk tomorrow."

Iodem nodded to the guard, then began to ask him where the inn was. The two conversed awhile, until curiosity got the better of Isaac.

"This blue haired man you speak of. Was he dead?"

"Huh? No, he's imprisoned in our jail. Has been for *nearly two months*. In fact, that was the reason the mayor travelled to Alhafra. The prisoner kept on insisting that he wasn't a pirate, and that he had a ship of his own. He claims that it was stolen from him at sea, a forceful exchange of boats. He says that his original ship was grand, with no oars, and a dragons head out front."

"In jail you say..."

"Yeah, the mayor journeyed to Alhafra in search of this boat and any evidence of the prisoner's innocence. He also looked for Briggs. No boat or Briggs, but he did find one

pirate. He got away of course, which is why we believe that they're still out there waiting. The mayor's son believes they will return and try to break the prisoner out, like they did Briggs. That's why we're always suspicious of newcomers, as well as why we inspected you at the gates."

"Hold on, so is this blue haired man innocent or not?" Iodem queried.

"No way! I mean in the early days a few thought he was innocent. But as day-by-day passed, those feelings were lost. Especially when the mayor returned empty handed, and with suspicions of pirates still."

Isaac continued to look around, allowing Iodem to once again inquire as to where the inn was.

When the discussion was over, Iodem and the guard began to return to the gates. Isaac wasn't with them. The servant of Babi turned around just in time to catch a glimpse of the blonde haired adept head in the other direction.

"Master Isaac?"

"Iodem, I must tend to some business... You can fetch the others at the gate on your own. I'll see you at the inn." the Valean said, gripping the hilt of a small sword that had been given to him that day. Isaac had a funny feeling deep down inside. A blue haired man, out at sea... He knew very well who it was. Alex... It had to have been him...

"But Isaac..."

"Iodem, trust me on this..."

Iodem watched him walk away. He did not like this at all. Isaac was asking for blind trust far too often...

XXXXX

The Lemurian sat in his cell, in the darkest corner that he could find. All he had was his thoughts, the one thing to keep him company in his meditative days. He had appointed to himself a vow of silence, which he had upheld for a time.

And then a young man walked into the prison. Piers had never seen him before, probably a traveller. He had golden hair with a blue jacket. His gloves and belt were trimmed in red, and his head was wrapped tightly with a white band. The bandage concealed his eye under its fibered cotton.

He stood there at the bars, looking straight at Piers with a stern and disconcerting face...

XXXXX

Isaac had entered the prison. In the first cell to the left were two men seeming as petty thieves. They looked like foreigners. However, the second cell was different.

In fact... it was empty. Isaac had a stern look on his face, wondering where 'the blue haired man' was. He leaned in on the bars thinking. The cell was actually clean, though the back walls were somewhat shrouded.

"Alex, where are you?" he questioned wonderingly. "What am I doing here... What am I doing here *alone*?" Isaac looked up to the ceiling.

Garet, Ivan, where can you be?

Oh Mia...

His chest sank with those thoughts, as he relieved his grip on his hilt, and then reached into his vest to pull out the

black crystal that controlled their ship.

What am I going to do now? Does this mean that my dream was just a dream?

"That's mine!" the water adept yelled furiously. Anger flushed through Piers as he lunged out of the dark corner towards Isaac. Isaac pulled back fast, but was yanked forward by Piers' grip on his collar. The Valean's face slammed hard into the iron bars and remained forcefully pressed against them.

The blue haired man gripped Isaac's hand within his own, wrestling over the Lemurian orb.

"How dare you!"

"Alex?"

"Give it baaaaaack!"

It's not Alex...but his hair is blue. The dream?

Isaac released the orb, dropping it into the cell. Piers bent down and swiped it quickly. He held it close to his chest, still clutching onto Isaac.

The earth adept stood there against the bars, not fighting back at all. He was in shock. Moreover, his cheek was frost bitten against the cold metal, as if pasted. Even his legs were at a stand still, knees not moving at all.

Ice.

Fingers of ice began to creep up his thigh, chilling him with their advancement. Wet blue seeped through his pant legs. It was cold, too cold. Yet there he stood, helpless as the

shards of ice grew to chest level, creeping at his forearms and neck. Soon, it had reached his face, hugging at his cheeks. From there it was a matter of seconds before Isaac disappeared in the shimmering glass like white and blue. He was stunned with the winter-like cold.

Isaac was completely frozen from head to toe, at all ends.

Retreat!

White spheres of psynergy danced before Piers, taking his attention away from the orb. They encircled the figure of ice, and in a blink of an eye, all disappeared.

"What was that?" Piers asked, as all grew silent.

"Impressive." Isaac stepped out of hiding from behind the ice sculpture. His clothes were damp cold, but he seemed fine. He stood beside the now hollow ice portrayal, admiring its likeness of him.

"Not even Mia could do this..." he whispered, pulling at the shoulder of the empty 'Isaac statue'. It tipped over, shattering upon the floor like glass. "You're an adept." Piers fled back to his dark corner suddenly, Isaac barely getting a good look at him.

"And you're a thief!"

Isaac stood there waiting for the man to come out once again. "I'm no thief. But I am an adept as well."

There was a long awkward period of silence, with only the words of the other prisoners being heard. They were in disbelief at what they had seen and were arguing quietly, in fear that the two adepts would hear them.

And then Piers finally stepped out once again. The blue haired man looked somewhat odd. He had an exotic headdress that drooped down to the middle of his back, and had a short sleeved, greenish cerulean, coat-like vest. He was wearing shorts and had admiral boots.

His hair was long in a low ponytail, and he had matching cerulean coloured eyes. He was exceptionally clean overall, yet his cheeks had a dirty five o'clock shadow. He had a beard growing in, the hairs short and jagged, matching the colour of his bangs. It seemed as if he had been here for a long time.

Piers handed back the orb. "It's not mine. I... am sorry" he apologized.

"Just a few seconds ago you were sure that I was a thief. What changed your mind?"

Piers looked to the floor with his reply. "At the bottom there's an engraved tag. That's how each orb is distinguished from one another. This code was different from my own."

"Then you're from Lemuria aren't you?" the earth adept smiled. Piers turned his back on Isaac, not wanting to talk anymore. He did not trust any non-Lemurian. He had once, but they had all let him down. Conservato was right.

"If you're a Lemurain, then you probably don't have an interest in pirating huh," Isaac laughed in an attempt to make conversation. There was still no reply. "I believe that you're innocent." Piers turned around in curiosity watching him walk away.

"...Wait!"

A/N: And so enters Piers... But this time it seems like he's teamed up with Isaac instead. I do apologize though; it will take some time, as well as a lot more chapters before all the main characters are fitted into the story. Right now I'm simply focusing on Isaac, and Isaac alone. Karst, Piers and Jenna have been featured, but have not acquired any leading roles, YET. Still more development left in future events... Write me a review! Thanks!

Peace and good love

***Chapter 6*: chapter 3: fateful encounters II**

A/N: In case all of you were wondering, the general last chapter was Navampa, though the clues were subtle. Please remember, Navampa, Satrage, and Azart were the men from Colosso.

Chapter 3, Act 2: Fateful Encounters

The General, known as Navampa, had been waiting in the town's centre for a while now. He had decided that he wanted to be early for the appointment with the men from Kalay, so that he would have some time to think to himself. And any way, he hadn't really anywhere else to go.

The town centre wasn't crowded this time of the day—a few others relaxing in benches that encircled half of the Tolbian Springs. He was the only one though leaning over the elevated pool, which stood five feet high. It was filled with clean fresh water, a statuesque dragons head pouring water out of its mouth.

However Navampa couldn't help but stare at his glimmering reflection in the water. The afternoon sun was strong that day, shining a brilliant blue on the cold ripples of water. He could see his reflection clearly, an illuminated image of the original. It was so much brighter that he could see his own face through the dark shroud his open faceguard created. He saw his own reflection look back on him, as if thinking the same thing... of course it was thinking the same thing, if shadowed reflections could even think at all.

This was foolish he concluded, reflecting on his feelings towards everything that was happening. He had to make it clear to himself; his duties now had to outweigh his doubtful constraint. Now was no time for second thought. Now was no time to be a man—to be the person he was. No, now was the time for him to be the General they all perceived him as. Now was the time to be a soldier...

He threw a lucky medal into the water. It was a nice change from the usual coins he threw. The medal was much heavier, and made a louder 'plop' sound when thrown into the fountain. A lucky medal...

May you give all the luck you can...

He wished that silently in his heart, drooping his eyes slightly till they nearly closed. He wished it with all the hope he had inside. No... in fact the *man* within him wished for that...

Navampa sighed to himself disapprovingly. He had just told himself that now of all times, he had to be 'the General'. He had just told himself that a few seconds ago, denying the man he was, denying himself to 'the General'. He smirked quietly.

Fine...

The General thought to himself abruptly.

I'll allow that, that one wish for luck. But that's it...

And so, the golden medal hit the bottom of the fountain. It landed slowly, staying a drift for a second, before falling on its face.

That was the last act of the man. A simple wish for good luck, before Navampa regained his composer as the *General*...

His comrades had arrived.

Navampa's head rose looking to his left, as his eyes were greeted by a familiar bright orange. From the western stairs his comrade Anatove, fellow General of 'Tolbi's big three' descended with a proud pace, escorted by two armoured men, five other soldiers following behind.

Anatove was the youngest of Tolbi's Generals, and was in charge of providing military aid and defence for Tolbi's non-local settlements. He adorned himself in the same type of armour as Navampa, however instead of purple, his representative colour was a Sunkist orange. He had the same apron like wooden armour, but trimmed in yellow instead, matching the tall Mohawk fibres on top of the helm. His face guard was also yellow, but was of a different design from Navampa's.

Navampa was relieved to see Anatove. He then turned his head to the easterly stairs, only to see the kid squire run down them, arms almost waving with every step. Five other Tolbian soldiers followed the boy. This did not please Navampa's eyes at all, as he didn't know what to make of this. He looked on waiting, but still nothing.

"Where is my younger brother Azart?" Navampa asked turning to Anatove.

"General Azart?" one of the fully armoured soldiers asked, standing next to Anatove.

"Yes," he said inspecting him. "Are you not one of his bodyguards? Why aren't you with him now? Where is he?"

Anatove stepped towards Navampa, removing his helm with both hands to express a warm smile. Anatove had short cut blonde hair, along with a short fade on his chin. He continued to smile, holding his helmet under his armpit.

"I'm more than happy to see you my old friend! It has been too long indeed. The last time I was in Tolbi, I was told that you were on an excursion in the mountain ranges. It is glad to see that you have returned in good health." Anatove said, placing a hand on Navampa's shoulders.

"Yes I'm happy to see you as well. You yourself have been gone for nearly a year now. I've even heard that you were off duty?"

"Yes, I was, but please don't be jealous of my special treatment." he jested, laughing to a soldier behind him.

Anatove had seemed a little too happy now—the complete opposite of Navampa.

"And it would seem that your brother Azart is no different from me, for he has taken his leave."

"Azart is on leave? Where?"

"General Azart has been on leave since the time of the Colosso events." one of the bodyguard sentries said.

"Since Colosso? Why did I not know of this?" Navampa retorted, looking down to his side at the young squire. He peered down on the youth, accusing him of not relaying the message. The boy looked up at him, not a hint of guilt or forgetfulness in his eyes.

"I'm sure this boy was not informed," Anatove interrupted, patting the youth's head. "In fact, barely anyone had know,

not even the council I would think. Only Mayor Babi."

Navampa continued to look down on the boy, no remorse in his eyes. It didn't seem like he was apologetic of his accusations towards the young squire. The boy didn't mind as much though; it was all okay to him.

"In fact it was a fluke that I had found out, because for a time he had ventured out to Kalay. By chance alone I ran into him in Kalay's market place."

"So Babi knew of this?" he asked, almost in a sheer disregard of respect for having not referred to him as 'Lord Babi'. It was all right though among the two Generals. He couldn't even recall all the times in which Anatove had done the same.

"Yes, Babi knew of this... I know what you're thinking Navampa. Exactly why would Babi allow 'Tolbi's big three' to go on temporary leave all at the same time?"

Navampa stood there, one arm resting on his waist, while the other reached under his helmet, barely scratching his neck.

"Why do you seem so stressed?" Anatove pleaded mockingly.

"First he allowed you to leave for nearly a year, then he allowed Azart to go for who knows long... then he let me go, for a week and a half in the mountains? It seems curious does it not? What if there was an emergency? None of us would have been here" Navampa concluded. Finally, curiosity got the better of him. "By any chance do you know where Azart has gone to?"

"Well, as I've said, we saw each other in Kalay. We talked for a while there. He was stocking up on traveling supplies. At

the time, myself as well as a few of my men had been living in Kalay. Well returning on topic," Anatove said, crossing his arms. "Azart told me that he was quite upset with his premature elimination from Colosso. Apparently he lost to some punk kid!"

Navampa said nothing to this.

"In all honesty, I think Azart began indulging himself with local rumour mongering. He had said that he was going to a famous mountain in some bums-ville continent. He claimed that the mountain was legendary, and that those that could climb it would become great and strong warriors. To think..." Anatove smirked.

Navampa thought hard on the dilemma that was before him; all of them—all of Tolbi.

"Some place called 'Air's Rock'" Anatove continued to laugh to the others through a grin. However he soon regained face. "Navampa my friend, though I so clearly mock these rumours, I by no means mock Azart. I believe that when he returns, he will feel better. When I spoke with him, he seemed so, so... angry and resentful for some reason. I was a bit concerned. I hope that it will give you relief to tell you that he is not alone. I sent my wife's brother, Mateause, as well as their cousin Verona with him. The three have journeyed to this 'Air' mountain."

"I see..." Navampa's concern did not lift.

"Navampa, they will be fine." Anatove said consolingly.

"Huh... that's right! Mateause and Verona were soldiers under your command weren't they?" The squire said openly, forgetting his belief that he should be quiet when they spoke. There was something about Anatove that made

people feel relaxed whenever they were around him. He was just so light-hearted, creating a healthy atmosphere around him. However, Navampa was still tense.

"Yes young squire, Mateause and Verona were of my finest, unlike these imbeciles here!" Anatove insulted humorously, as he motioned to all the other men.

"Hey!"

"What does that mean?"

"This coming from a drunkard!" one of the men began, "Do you intend on passing out in another bar again? " The other men began to agree and cheer the one soldier who had said this, laughing and pointing at their General.

"I had good reason for the drinks..." Anatove protested with a grin.

The boy thought for a while. "Ah, yes. Weren't you on leave because of your wife?"

"Your wife Birbi?" Navampa asked.

"Yes," Anatove replied to both the boy and Navampa. "As of one week from this day, I have become a proud father to my new born baby. If you must know, it wasn't my fault if the celebrations got carried away."

"Yeah," one of the bodyguards continued. "His wife gave birth to a beautiful baby girl." The men cheered again for Anatove, including the boy as well.

"Was that why you were on leave? Birbi was pregnant?"

"Yes, she lived in Kalay. She is still there with the babe." he smiled. "Yes, I'm a family man now. No more Colosso tournaments for this soldier." Navampa remembered Colosso, and remembered that Anatove had not participated in the events this year.

"Are you still worried about your brother?" Anatove interrupted Navampa's thoughts.

"No."

"It was his own fault for having been beat by a punk kid. I remember last year he ended with third place, right?"

"Yes,"

"Right... I remember that mercenary Satrage defeated him. Oh was he angry! It seems as if every year Azart's short handed of being Colosso Champion. Not like his bigger brother though! No men, our little Navampa over here has been Colosso Champion for three years running now." Anatove spoke, wrapping his arm around the purple armoured soldier. "I'm so proud!" he jested, as if acting as Navampa's father.

"Two years."

"What?" Anatove asked curiously.

"Two."

Anatove continued to stare at his friend, arm still slung around him. "You didn't win this year? You mean to tell me that you allowed that thug Satrage to take the championship from you—one of Tolbi's elite?"

"No I didn't say that... it was... 'the punk kid'" he replied in seriousness

There was a long pause, not a word said. Navampa was always the champion, a man that was looked up to by so many...

As soon as the silence had set, Anatove had a vigorous outburst of laughter, clutching his sides almost in pain by the humour. All the men laughed, not able to hold back as best they could. The entire town centre was in a shocked uproar, of which, Navampa allowed.

"It runs in the family!" someone cried out laughing.

"What do they feed children nowadays!"

"Come, I wish to retire in the palace. You can tell be about your epic defeat by a boy half your age!" Anatove cried, struggling with the words in between laughs.

"Now is not for good times..." Navampa spoke dead serious once again, as he brought out the scroll from under his armour. Anatove tried his best to stop laughing as he turned and drew nearer, standing before his friend.

Navampa waited until Anatove was serious once again, before he offered the scroll that had been given to him the day before.

The youth squire stood to both Navampa's and Anatove's side, watching Navampa hold the scroll.

Feeling duty bound once again, he instinctively grabbed the scroll from his mentor, and offered it to the other General. Anatove took it, as both men gave the boy a funny look for

the unnecessary gesture. After all, they were barely an arm's length away.

"..."

Sometimes that boy tries way too hard...

XXXXX

The city of Tolbi was grand. Karst was amused, yet distasteful towards the crowd. She didn't like crowds of non-Proxians. She was too proud.

Strangely enough, her reasons for having traveled so far from Lalivero were strictly based on speculation. Apparently, there were rumours of a strange traveller, whose skin and eyes were exotically brilliant with colour, and who spoke of the elemental stars, a dying home called Prox, and a message for a woman named Karst.

She had believed it to be Saturos or Menardi. However, her hunches were far from the truth, for in actuality, it had been Agatio asking around, though she had no idea that he was even in *pursuit* of her...

A few backpacking traveler's had relayed rumours of someone searching for a 'Karst', in the docks of Lalivero, shortly after Isaac had left her.

Now, she was searching for a man named Navampa, one of Tolbi's Generals, of whom, had many important responsibilities; one of which was to regulate all the foreigners. Hopefully this Navampa fellow would know who was looking for her...

A scruffy man bumped into her, as her heightened senses soon told her that he was trying to pickpocket her. She

quickly grabbed his hand from her waist, warning him of what had happened the last time she had encountered thieves, as well as giving her own personal comments of people like him.

"Such a foul mouth," the General said. She looked up to see the purple of the man's armour.

Navampa, with four others and his squire, were walking through the city. They all seemed very observant towards the city planning, occasionally pointing at the rooftops or balconies. Not once had Navampa looked at her.

"I do as I please."

"That must be convenient," He made a few comments about city defence to his men, as well as how to protect it from attack. "Squire: go to the weapon's shop. Give me a list of what the wares, and ask of his gunpowder stock."

The boy stood there for a bit. "What's gunpowder?" The other soldiers shared the boy's curiosity.

"To you my boy, its just a number... And I'm going to need you to find out what that number is." the General spoke sternly.

"Yes sir!" he said running off towards Karst.

"Sir, what is gunpowder?"

"Its an oddity that the scholars created, using their sciences."

"Oh," the soldier said, still confused at the concept. "Hold on, what is a 'gun'?"

Karst was studying the purple clad soldier, and at the last moment spotted the young squire make his way in her direction, quickly averting his gaze as the two made eye contact. She quickly cut him off as he ran forward, preventing him from going any further.

"Tell me boy, who is that man over there?" The boy did not answer, and instead looked back at Navampa, hoping that he would be told what to do, even though Navampa was still talking about gunpowder. "So what, don't you have a tongue boy?" She questioned further, mocking with intimidation. Clearly, this boy was either too scared or too shy to uphold a decent conversation.

Thus, he shuffled to the side, trying to pass her. She quickly stood in front of him yet again.

"It was a simple question..." she asked curiously with a disbelieving tilt in her eyebrows. "Just tell me and then be on your way." He shuffled to the other side, as she yet again cut him off. This continued once more, before Navampa screamed out in anger.

"Boy, I don't have time here!"

Having been completely caught off guard, the youth lurched forward, bouncing off Karst hard, falling on his side. She looked down on him in amazement. She looked at Navampa, who only shook his head in disgrace. Karst looked down again. He was still just a child, and she had sadly overlooked that fact.

Karst squatted, her frown long forgotten. She placed her hand on his shoulder while the other lifted his chin. "Hey now, it's okay. I didn't mean it"

The boy looked up at her holding back a tear. She patted his head, lifted him up by one arm, and finally told him to be on his way—but not before wrinkling her nose to him in a tender smile. He felt better. The Proxian looked up again, realizing that he was now gone.

XXXXX

"And where have you been?" Kraden asked curiously, though he already knew the answer. It was hard for him to say those words to a tired Jenna.

"I've been exploring the forests, as well as a part of the fissure..." Jenna replied as she dragged the end of her walking stick along the dirt.

"And the lighthouse?"

"Yes, and the lighthouse. I forgot to mention that. I still can't find another entrance."

"It seems as if every time you go exploring, you go deeper and deeper into the forest, and closer to the ruined lighthouse. What is it you expect to find?"

"They could still be out there... I'm not going to give up on Felix, or Isaac." Jenna spoke quietly under her breath. Kraden sighed, taking in a deep breath. He had to be careful with his words now.

"It has been three months Jenna. There is nothing more you can do now for them. If they are alive, then hope that they are somewhere else, well off, and more importantly, alive. Your brother, Garet, as well as Isaac are a resourceful bunch. They're not the type to just go and die."

"But..."

"If Felix is still alive, then I believe he would have gone already on his own, on to Jupiter Lighthouse. You remember the way he was acting before. Not to mention that there's also the possibility, that Felix may be the one to believe that we are the ones dead! After all, Idejima was swallowed by the whirlpools and earthquake. It appeared that way at least."

"I suppose. If it weren't for Alex, we would have ended up on that floating island..." Jenna slightly reminisced of how Alex had saved them that day.

"Ah yes, Alex. If Felix is out there, trust Alex enough to find him. And then there's Isaac and his group. I would imagine that they had absolutely no idea that you and I are here now in Lalivero still." Kraden watched as small tears hazed her eyes. He had absolutely no idea how tormented she felt.

"But what if you're wrong?" she continued doubtfully. "What if they're still trapped there, in the lighthouse?"

"Then they would probably be dead." he replied factually, his words striking like a pin through her heart. "Are you ready to accept that possibility child?"

"Stop treating me like a child. Stop trying to shelter me from finding the truth!" she swore, swinging her arms wide. "I need to know—even if they're all dead. Who are you to tell me to remain in the dark like this, and just sit here and do nothing!" She stormed out once again, though she was truly exhausted from her day's exploration. She had no idea where she was going, but grabbed a cloak before she went. Clouds loomed overhead the setting sun; rain was expected that night.

Kraden no longer knew what to make of the girl. He wanted to tell her about Isaac, but feared that wouldn't help. Isaac's

survival would only give more doubt as to the possibility that Felix was still alive.

XXXXX

Anatove sat alone on a stool, third row from the front, looking at the empty Colloso ring. Navampa entered. The stadium had been unused for months, leaving it to the keep of dust, emptiness, and silence. A couple of torches were lit, leaving the stadium's grandness forgotten in a veil of thick blackness. A lone candle sat in the stool next to Anatove, while his helmet lay on his knee, posing as an armrest. In his other hand was an oversized mug filled with a fluid, of which Navampa could only presume to be alcohol.

"I see you're drinking again. The men weren't procrastinating when they said you were a drunkard." Navampa said, taking a seat next to the almost burnt out candle. He placed his own helmet on the chairs back.

"I'm not a stupid drunkard. I drink for good reason."

"As would I," Navampa continued, taking the mug from his friend. Navampa brought the brim of the mug to mouth level, but spoke before drinking. "Yes, being a General is not an easy task. The stress gets to us, which is why occasional drinks are a relief."

Navampa rocked the mug into a swish before taking in a large gulp. The General played with the fluid in his mouth, tossing it from cheek to cheek in a couple of swigs, letting the taste roll off his tongue.

He did not feel the burning sensation that one would usually feel from alcohol, which was very, very, odd. Navampa looked up to his fellow comrade with a peculiar look. Anatove held back a giggle.

Navampa spat out the contents in his mouth, letting it pour back out into the mug. His stare was as strong as ever, yet Anatove still did not look down. His eyes were focused on a spot on the wall, over the ring.

"A fruit drink?" Navampa asked calmly, yet carrying a frustrated tone. Anatove stared harder at the invisible spot on the wall, a smile creeping on his cheeks.

"Yes my friend." Anatove responded sarcastically, a laugh starting up in the pit of his stomach. "Yes I drink like all men do!" he continued in an exaggeratedly deep and manly voice, somewhat imitating Navampa.

"Yet you drink a child's drink" Navampa retorted.

"I drink not because of stress. I drink because of the cold I got last night at the docks" he said deeply, lifting his arms in a 'strong man' pose, rocking his upper body from side to side.

The two had a good laugh as Anatove finally broke under the pressure, bawling his eyes out. His friend handed back the mug, eyes wide open in a sarcastic nod.

Anatove gave an intently curious look at the drink. Navampa had just backwashed the juice, yet Anatove couldn't help but think. The mug was still half full...

"Don't even think about it," Navampa announced, already knowing what Anatove was thinking of doing.

"But its a shame to be wasteful," Anatove gulped down the now *vile* drink, trying his best to finish it in one motion.

Navampa was utterly disgusted, yet couldn't help but laugh, harder than he had done so in such a long time. The General

couldn't stop himself from laughing further, as his voice was echoed in the stadium. Anatove felt satisfied that he had finally made Navampa laughed.

"Congratulations to you and your wife Anatove. I am sorry that I hadn't said anything earlier."

"It's fine, but thanks! I understand now... you had a lot on your mind." Anatove remembered what had been written on the scroll.

"Yes."

"A lot more than one would think. I know you well enough. Tell me, what was really bothering you?" Anatove accused. There was a moment of silence, laughter no longer filling their ears

"It must be nice, having a family... Anatove, you're a father now. You can't keep on thinking of what you alone want. You can't be so selfish..."

"So I see, it's the issue of fatherhood. Hearing that I was now a father, that must have dug up some painful memories for you, especially with the company that had been there..."

"Oliver?"

"Yes...you'll have to tell *him* one of these days..."

"He lives with a kind elderly couple, Kathy's parents."

"Well that's all fine for them, yes indeed. I'm sure they'll do a better job raising him, than his deadbeat parents."

"Anatove! Don't speak of Kathy's memory like that. Your sarcasm is not *a/ways* appreciated"

"That was not sarcastic! I never meant for the word *deadbeat* to strike a cord like that. I wasn't using it in that sense. I'm just saying *he* deserves to know. And maybe you should think about yourself too, it's not healthy to keep things like that bottled up."

"It's not that."

"Then? I'm out of guesses. I'm gonna have to go back to the 'punk kid' theory, and only imagine that you have sour grapes about Colosso." Anatove had a fetish for sarcasm

Navampa finally confessed it all to him, the reason he was so down trotted lately...

"Remember the excursion I made to the mountain ranges." Anatove nodded as he took another drink of the foul fruit drink. "One night I saw it. The reason for war..."

"You can't possibly mean this supposed dragon of rumour..." he chuckled. "Are you serious?" he continued when Navampa wouldn't answer.

"I swear to you I saw it—the two-headed demon of fire. Rumour is true; there is a dragon out there. I saw it with my own eyes." Navampa shook his head preparing himself for Anatove's insults. Instead, a firm hand gripped his shoulder.

"So I see. That's what I like about you... you are reliably honest. No jokes whatsoever, ever. I mean, I'm guessing its because you're dead weight with humour, but either way, I've always been impressed with your seriousness."

"Then you believe me? But why? Where is your trademark laugh? The mocking?" he said disbelievingly. It even seemed as if Anatove wasn't paying attention, for his next reaction to the conversation was unreal.

"No time! I have a family to protect now... Tell me where is the selfishness in that? And anyways, if it turns out that you are wrong about all this, I'll do all the mocking then," Anatove smiled with a glint in his eyes. He always knew how to lighten up the mood. He was just too well natured. "Thank you," Navampa whispered, only to have his words drowned out....

A strange roar echoed like thunder in the mountain ranges, booming in a shrilled whistle. Everyone in Tolbi froze at the dragon cry from so very, very far away, it's sound just as strongly heard in the palace and stadium.

No one had any idea as to what it could have been, except for the two General's alone.

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Back in Madras, Isaac was found sitting calmly at the mayor's dining table. The Mayor and his son sat across from him, whilst Iodem leaned against a wall. The other soldiers of Isaac's crew remained outside, loitering. Iodem began before Isaac could.

"I am amused to see that your town is fairly prosperous. Most regions along the fissure have come under the greatest of hardships. Just the other day, we came across the Kandorean Temple. It was in complete ruins."

"Yes, between pirates and earthquakes, Madras has seen more than its share of hardships. However, we must count our blessings still. Like you have said, others are far worse off than us."

"If I may be so bold," the younger man said. He had a distinguished nose, much like his old father, as well as the same mayor attire. "What reason would Tolbi officials have

for coming here now?" He seemed rather upset stumbling over his own words.

"We are here on personal affairs that do not concern politics." Isaac answered before Iodem could.

Iodem looked away as he could feel the confusion from the Madrasians. He was somewhat embarrassed to be standing there. Iodem had remembered Isaac's reasoning for the journey, and he himself did not believe it to be plausible.

Flashback...

One of the soldiers pounded hard on the wooden table; the noise startling the innkeeper who was just about to retire to his room for a well-deserved sleep.

"A dream? How can you tell me that now! Iodem! I believed you when you told me that Isaac was worth following in this crusade against the mission of finding Lemuria; against Lord Babi's wishes."

Iodem stood there in shock as well, looking at the Volean. He shared the same feelings as the soldier, yet was reserved when it came to temper.

"You must believe in me." Isaac said calmly.

Iodem, for the first time, began to feel regret. The promise made to Isaac long ago left him feeling empty. It was as if he were being made to eat his own words now. Regret.

"Just wait until we return to Tolbi. Imagine the humility!"

"Hold on, wait..." the other soldier said, seeming like the most relaxed of the four on the main level. "Wait guys, you

must still remember... Isaac also promised an end to the dragon scare."

*"Dragon scare! Dragon scare! Simon there is **no** dragon out there!"*

Iodem's mind snapped back to reality as he realized that he was lost in the current conversation.

"And what business would you have with this Pirate?" the mayor's son protested.

"This man," Isaac began, "was given a chance to be proven innocent. That was why you had journeyed to Alhafra, correct?"

"We found no such proof. We gave him so many chances to explain himself. So many, but no plausible reason was given to us. He just remained there in his cell. What were we to do?"

"That's a weak excuse," Isaac responded with a sigh.

"But," the mayor's son protested till his father silenced him. The old man had rested his hand on his shoulder.

"Please," Isaac asked again.

"Fine. If you believe you could, then you can defend his case. Prove to us that Piers is innocent." The elder finished the conversation, telling his son to follow them, and listen to any more that needed to be said on Isaac's part.

They thanked the mayor for having heard what they had to say, and then left; the mayor's son followed behind them as instructed.

They all gathered outside, Iodem rallying the men while the mayor's son continued to question over the broad shoulders of the Tolbian.

Isaac just stood there by himself, staring up at the diminishing blue of the overhead sky. It was a beautiful day, as well as a beautiful sunset that he was watching. Not a cloud in sight upon the fading azure, turning to a warm glowing orange. However, the setting sun reminded him of his past, and what the sky was like that day he woke up at the ruined Venus aerie.

The sky was warm that day also, for a time...

The aerie...

His eyes became disillusioned as he began to remember the aerie...

XXXXX

"So, what do you think about my new scarf?" the girl questioned cheerfully, not breaking the eye contact she had with her reflection on the mirror.

Jenna on the other hand, couldn't be bothered. She was too wrapped up with her own problems to notice. She sat distractedly on a stool, pouring a cup of tea for herself, of which so happened to be the same thing Isaac had been doing three days ago, even at the exact hour roughly.

"Yeah, um." The innkeeper's daughter continued. "If you want you can sleep in my room tonight. My dad would've given you a hotel room free of charge and everything, but they're all booked right now. Don't worry though; it'll be like a sleep over! It's gonna be fun." She turned to look at Jenna, who still seemed depressed. Worse had come to worse, and

in the end Jenna had chosen to go to the inn rather than returning to Feran's house, where Kraden was now.

"Thanks Lila." Lila was the innkeeper's daughter, fifteen years old. She slightly reminded Jenna of herself when she was that age. Lila was always cheerfully loud, lively and spunky, but only when she hung around Jenna. On every other occasion, she was shy and timid. It was something about having a friend like Jenna that brought something out of her. Lila had never had a female friend around her age before. She almost looked to her as a sister, these past few months they knew each other.

"You okay?" Lila asked, appearing reserved and timid all of a sudden, as if expecting the worst.

"I've finally decided," Jenna spoke, sipping some tea. "I'm leaving Lalivero. I'm going to travel to the other lighthouses." Lila knew well enough about the quest to light the lighthouses, having been informed thoroughly by Jenna in the past.

"I think you should stay," Lila protested with a puppy look on her face.

"There's nothing here for me anymore," Jenna whispered, lowering her chin to the table's surface. She pressed her lips against the resting cup for warmth, slightly being scorned.

"What about the lighthouse reconstruction," Lila pointed out observantly, remembering the rumours of Feran and Kraden gathering all the construction workers. "Ya'know," she suddenly began to ask. "I thought that only adepts could enter the lighthouse, through the secret entrance north of Lalivero—beneath Babi's lighthouse."

Jenna shuddered at the idea, so disappointed with herself as she began to remember that horrible day... the day the doors wouldn't open for her, and when even her own fire psynergy wouldn't answer when summoned...

That was the one reason she couldn't enter the lighthouse. Apparently, both Weyard and the element of fire, no longer recognized her as an adept. Since the lighthouse destruction, a great emptiness had grown in her heart. She was so very dispassionate as day after day passed, and soon she began to lose touch with her own powers, until eventually, she became nothing more than a non-adept. Jenna couldn't understand any of this.

"But you know what," Lila snickered in whispers, "Apparently, Feran had a dream involving Sheba, as she told him how to enter the lighthouse and rebuild it from the inside," Lila continued, interrupting Jenna's self-loathing thoughts. "It sounds interesting. Maybe you could help them in some way."

"I'll think about it," she answered, still pretending that nothing was wrong with her. Jenna refused to tell anyone that she had *lost* her psynergy abilities.

A/N: Well, did you like the ending? If you loved it, then I'm grateful. Please review! Thanks.

My next chapter is long, about 10,000 words, even though it's pretty much one big battle scene. However, I'm not sure as to how you the readers would like me to approach this: Should I break it into two parts instead? My chapters so far have all been about 5 000 words a piece, but still, I guess I don't know what to do next. Give me feedback!

Peace and good love